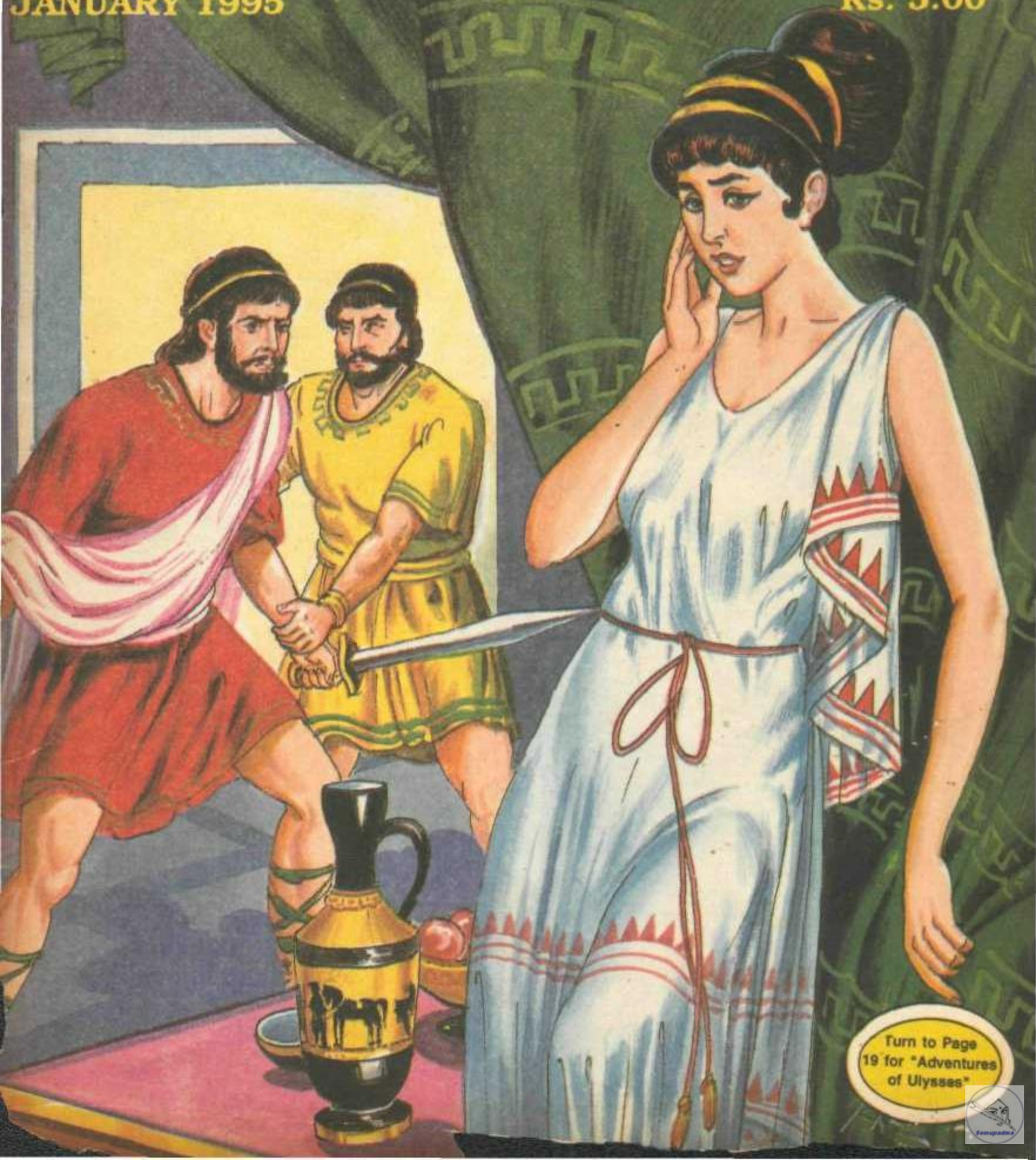


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CHANDAMAMA

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NEXT ISSUE

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A STRANGE COW : A farmer and his wife are given to daydreaming. When he grows rich, he will buy a beautiful cow; she will milk it. But where will she store all the milk? Of course, in a HUGE pot, she says. The woman promptly goes and buys four pots-one for milk, another for butter, a third for curd. Why a fourth one? asks the farmer. Her answer starts a quarrel. Their neighbour intervenes to bring the two back to reality! A popular folk tale from Bengal.

THE ADVENTURES OF SUPER SEVEN : Three children, enjoying a well-earned holiday, go to meet their three cousins, who keep a pet monkey. They make up the Super Seven. They do not have to go in search of adventures; adventures seem to come their way! This story is by a 16-year-old.

PLUS "Forts of India-2" in pull-out form, stories from the MAHABHARATA, Adventures of ULYSSES, and all other regular features including your favourite PANCHATANTRA.

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Controlling Editor :
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Founder
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Greening the child's mind

A decade ago, in Delhi, the finalists from 30 different States went about making their 'presentation' on the project given to children on Environment. Each of them had come fully prepared – with charts and diagrams, statistics and speeches. They vied with each other for marks and final awards. The chief guest, Sunderlal Bahuguna, the well-known environmentalist who pioneered the chipko (hug the trees) movement, prefaced his remarks with a simple question: "How many of you have planted a sapling with your own hands?" He waited for all thirty hands to go up. But none went up!

We are reminded of a Chinese proverb: "If you want something within a year, cultivate the land; but if you want something for your children, plant a tree."

It is a happy turn of events that several schools which enjoy a piece of land have, of late, been encouraging their students to plant saplings within the compound. They are also required to tend them every day. A teacher in Orissa went a step further. He asked a girl to sit beside the sapling she planted and sing songs. In two months, its growth was impressive, compared to that of the one planted by a boy who was directed to shout at it and be generally rude with it.

This was how the teacher proved to the children that plants are living beings just like themselves.

More than what one can learn about plants and trees by reading text-books and listening to lectures, it is by actual handling of saplings, tending them with one's own hands, and watching their growth can one get a better awareness of the need for the co-existence of trees and human beings.

*Chandamama wishes all its readers
a very happy New Year*

NEWS FLASH

SKIPPING TO A RECORD

A 22-year-old house surgeon of Madras, on November 21, attempted to enter the Guinness Book of Records by skipping continuously for five hours. He took 40,181 skips in all. Normally, for any endurance test, a 5-minute break every hour is permitted. However, G. Ramprasad took a break of only 20 seconds each three times during his feat lasting five hours. Two years ago, he squat and got up 3,590 times in one hour, but by the time the event was reported to the Guinness authorities, that year's edition of the Book had come out. This time, a certificate of his attempt has been sent in proper time. His record of 8,556 skips in one hour has already been printed

in "Limca". Incidentally, Dr. Ramprasad's area of speciality is paediatrics or treatment of children.

A RECORD AMBITION

He is yet to create a record, but he hopes to, and soon. M. Parthasarathy, of Coimbatore, is capable of doing 8,500 somersaults in 9 hours, with a 5-minute break every one hour. He will require a stretch of 16 km to perform this feat. Naturally, he needs the help of authorities to keep the roads traffic free. He is a Physical Education instructor, besides being a gymnast and a Black Belt in karate. To achieve his current ambition, he has been practising for nearly a year. The present record is 8,341 somersaults in ten-and-a-half hours made by Ashrita Furman, of the U.S.A.

AN 11-YEAR WALK

This by a 27-year-old woman. Ffyona Campbell, of Scotland, was only 16 years old when she set out from the northernmost tip of Britain - a hamlet called John O'Groat's. The teenager's intention, then, was only to walk 1,363 km to the land's end, but she did not stop there, and went on, and on, and on till she walked 31,338 km across five continents before returning to John O'Groat's 11 years later, on October 14. In Australia, she walked from Sydney to Perth; in the U.S.A. from New York to Los Angeles. She took two years to cover Africa from one end to the other. "I just wanted to see how far I could go," she replied when she was asked why she did not retrace her steps in Britain. Of one thing she is definite now. Next time she sets out, she would not go alone.





The King's Last Wish

Vimaladitya was the King of Vikramপুরi. He was a cruel ruler. His subjects suffered under his rule. It was not as if he was unaware of their sufferings, but he would not change his ways; in fact, he derived some pleasure when their complaints reached his ears. Strange as it may look, he regretted his actions when he was on his death bed.

He realised that he did not have many days left to live, so he sent for his son, Kamaladitya. "After my death, the people may blame me for their trials and tribulations. You must do something, my son, to see that I'm only praised. Only then will my soul rest in peace." The king lived long enough merely to see the prince nod his head.

Kamaladitya ascended the throne soon after the funeral rites of the king were gone through. Unlike his father, Kamaladitya was a man of virtues. He established a common

eating place and started an educational institution, both in memory of Vimaladitya. He was eager to find out what the people thought about the two institutions.

So, one day, he went to the eating place in disguise and took his seat along with the poor who came there to have a free meal. Hundreds were fed, still not one went back with a contented face. He went up to one of them and asked, "Do you come here regularly? It seems to be a popular place."

"It's a commendable idea, no doubt," the man replied. "But why should it bear the name of a cruel king? Everybody feels that this place could have been called after one of the king's ancestors. They were all good rulers. People don't really relish the food given here because the place reminds them of the cruel ruler."

Kamaladitya was vexed on hear

ing the man's reply. He next went to the school. When he entered the gate, he was surprised to see a lone teacher; there was not a single student! He questioned the teacher.

"Parents are wary of sending their children here," answered the teacher, regretfully. "They feel that the children will turn cruel if they study at a place which bears the name of the cruel king."

Kamaladitya did not want to hear anything more from him. As he rushed back to the palace, crestfallen, he decided what he would do. He ordered the closure of both the eating place and school from the next day. He was sad that he could not fulfil his father's last wish.

A few days later, he had a dream, in which his father appeared before him, tears in his eyes. The next morning he asked his minister the significance of the dream. "It only means that his last wish is yet to be fulfilled," explained the minister.

From that day, Kamaladitya began to introduce several reforms for the welfare of the people. He reduced taxes; laid new roads; opened free schools in villages; apprehended thieves and other criminals. Very soon, his subjects started enjoying a happy and contented life. Kamaladitya's fame spread far and wide. On the advice of his minister, the young king erected statues of his father at different crossroads.

Once again, Kamaladitya went out incognito to find out the people's reaction. He was accompanied by his minister. They overheard a conversation between a visitor to the kingdom and a citizen. "Whose statue is this?" the visitor asked. "He is the father of our king whom we consider our god!" replied the citizen. "Only because he is no more that we have the good fortune of getting a good ruler."

Kamaladitya was now happy. The people were no longer speaking ill of his father.



THE WAX DOLL

I was stunned to find myself in the Museum. I could not believe that I had fallen asleep. I remembered quickly that I had to be on my guard. The guards in the Museum had not seen anyone, but they said that things started moving by themselves. The night before there had been a robbery of a priceless painting. Being one of the courageous people of the town, without the others knowing, I had slipped into the Museum. Now I was locked up and in the dark. The guards had said that things started moving by themselves around midnight. There was another hour to go before anything started. It was quite cold in the gallery and I was huddled up, shivering in a corner of the huge room behind some wax dolls.

I sat there shivering as it neared midnight. On the dot, the wax doll in front of me moved slowly forward towards the wall and slowly lifted its wax hands towards the old painting hanging on the wall. I hardly dared to breathe when the wax doll turned round and gave me a glare. I jumped up and walked purposefully towards the wax doll. She backed away rather quickly. Suddenly, she ran and vanished into thin air. I was really stunned. It would soon be daybreak, so I slipped out through a small window.

That evening, I went exploring outside the museum. I had seen the blueprints of the Museum long ago. I knew that the building was old, and there was a door somewhere in the undergrowth. I soon found the door. It had not been locked, so I pushed it open. It did not even creak a bit as I had expected it to. It looked like, it had recently been oiled. I had carried a torch from home. I switched it on. The tunnel, too, seemed to have been recently cleaned. Not a speck of dust was to be seen. I kept walking and before turning a corner, I heard voices. I quickly turned off the flashlight, but from around the corner there was a crack of light coming through.

I peeked in and I saw a young woman wearing something like the wax doll's dress! Now she was putting on a mask after wearing thin shiny gloves which made her look exactly like the wax doll! She was talking about me. "Some meddlesome kid was there last night. I gave her a real scare by 'vanishing into thin air'." She burst out laughing with the man standing next to her. I ran back to the door and then to the police. Soon, I had the police with me. She had mentioned the time she would be going into the Museum through the trapdoor I had seen above her head.

At 6 p.m. Wednesday evening, I helped to catch a wax doll. That night I was treated like a VIP.





If one is easy of access to all, it will be easy for one to obtain the virtue called goodness.

- Thirukkural



AFTER SOME TIME....

OHI NO! PLEASE! TAKE ME WITH YOU!



GO BACK TO YOUR OLD MAN!

WHAT A MISERABLE WRETCH I AM! WHERE CAN I GO? HOW CAN I FACE MY HUSBAND?



AT THAT MOMENT A JACKAL COMES THERE HOLDING A PIECE OF MEAT.



AHI WHAT DO I SEE? A BIG FISH! IT LOOKS SO DELICIOUS.... I'LL HAVE IT.



THE JACKAL LEAVES THE MEAT AND JUMPS FOR THE FISH.



THE FISH DIVES INTO THE RIVER AND DISAPPEARS....



IT'S GONE!



MEANWHILE, A KITE SWOOPS ON THE MEAT AND FLIES AWAY WITH IT.



O! MY MEAT! GONE!



POOR THING! YOU LOST YOUR MEAT AND THE FISH SLIPPED AWAY. WHAT A PITY.



YOU, WOMAN! YOU'VE LOST YOUR HUSBAND AND HOME, YOUR WEALTH AND YOUR LOVER! YOU DON'T DESERVE ANY PITY!



An act that has been firmly resolved on must be as firmly carried out without delay.

THE CROCODILE CONCLUDES THE STORY....

I'M JUST LIKE THE
THOUGHTLESS WIFE AND
THE SILLY JACKAL.



I LOST MY WIFE AND MY
FRIEND.



MEANWHILE, A NEIGHBOUR
OF KRAKACHA COMES
THERE

I BRING BAD
NEWS FOR YOU.



YOU ALWAYS BRING ME ONLY
BAD NEWS. WHAT IS IT THIS
TIME?

ANOTHER CROCODILE HAS
OCCUPIED YOUR ABODE.



OH! WHAT SHALL I DO NOW?
WHERE SHALL I GO?



MISFORTUNES NEVER
COME SINGLY!



HOW CAN I SEND HIM OUT
OF MY HOUSE BY FORCE?
BY SOFT WORDS? BY BRI-
BERY? INTRIGUE?



DEAR FRIEND! GIVE ME
SOME ADVICE!



WHAT IS THE GOOD OF GIV-
ING ADVICE TO ONE WHO
DOESN'T DESERVE IT?

THIS REMINDS ME OF A
STORY!



They will be loved by the world who have not forsaken the
friendship of those with whom they have kept up an unbroken
long-standing intimacy.



WHAT'S IT?



ONE DAY THERE WAS HEAVY RAIN IN THE FOREST. A MONKEY SAT SHIVERING UNDER A TREE.



ON THE SAME TREE A COUPLE OF BIRDS LIVE IN A NEST. ONE OF THEM TAKES PITY ON HIM.



FRIEND! YOU'VE STRONG ARMS AND LEGS LIKE THOSE OF A MAN.

SO WHAT?



WHY DON'T YOU BUILD A HOUSE AND TAKE SHELTER IN IT FROM THE COLD AND WIND?



HOW PROUD OF HIS INTELLIGENCE IS THIS BIRD!



STOP YOUR WAGGING TONGUE, YOU UGLY BIRD! I KNOW WHAT TO DO?



BUT THE BIRD PERSISTS IN ADVISING THE MONKEY.

LISTEN! I SHALL TELL YOU WHAT TO DO!



SHUT UP! I HAD ENOUGH OF YOUR TWITTERING NON-SENSE!

PLEASE LISTEN!



I SHALL NOW PAY YOU BACK FOR YOUR UNWANTED ADVICE!



BALIVARDA CONCLUDES THE STORY THIS

THE MONKEY GOT WILD AND DESTROYED THE NEST AND KILLED THE BIRDS.



SO, GIVE YOUR ADVICE TO THOSE WHO ARE FIT TO RECEIVE IT.



To Continue

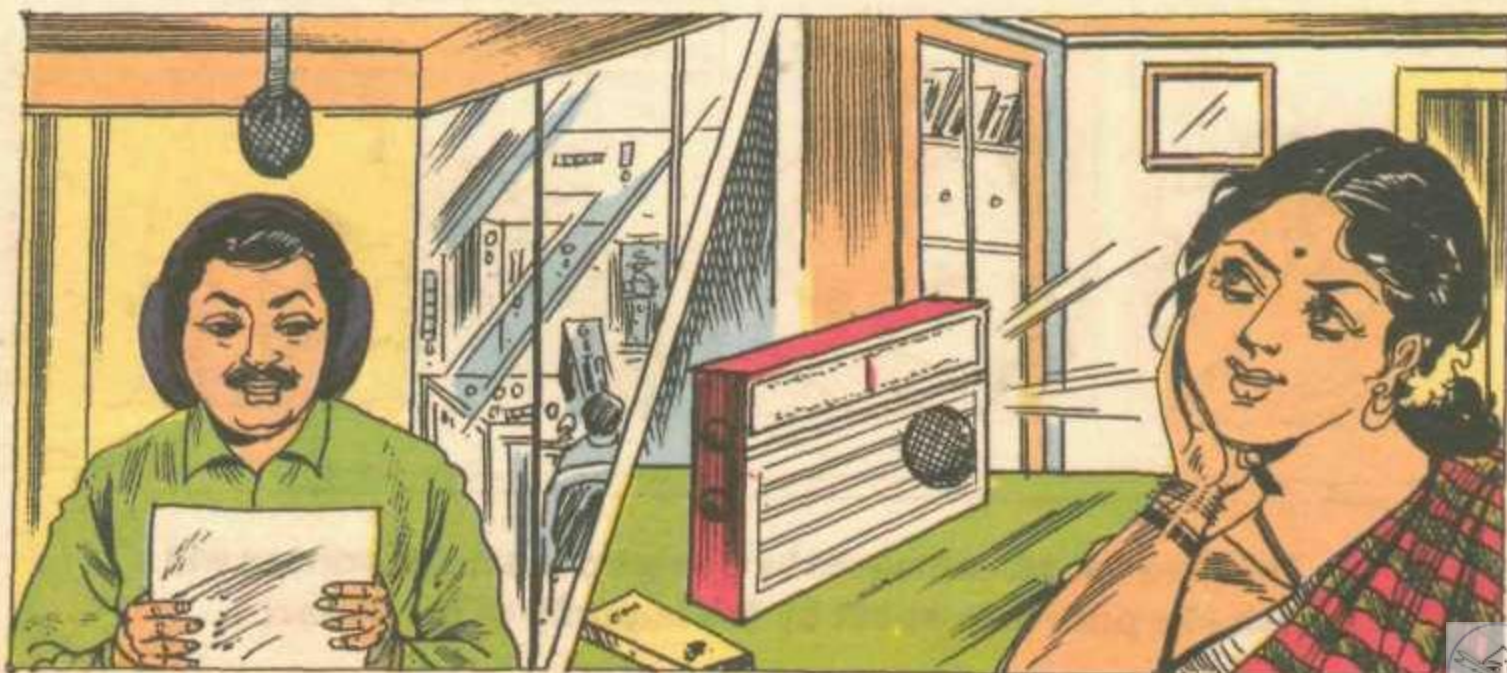
The great wealth obtained by one who has no goodness will perish like pure milk spoilt by the impurity of the vessel.



Truth without disguise

Reader M. Rajarajeswari, of Belgaum, wishes to know the difference between *plain truth* and *naked truth*. *Plain truth* or *simple truth* refers to an established fact or statement which has no possibility of any variation. *Naked truth* is also a form of plain truth; it is *undisguised truth*. There is no attempt made to give truth any frills. It is said, Truth is bitter; it is not sugarcoated! The expression *naked truth* has come out of a story. There were two goddesses : the goddess of Truth, and the goddess of Falsehood. They went together to bathe in a river. Falsehood hurriedly finished her bath and came out of the river first. She went straight to where Truth had left her clothes and wore them. A while later, Truth came out of the river and found her clothes missing. Falsehood, too, was missing, though her own clothes lay on the bank. Truth realised what had happened. She did not want to go about wearing someone else's clothes – anyway not Falsehood's. So, the goddess of Truth is stated to have walked around naked. That is how everyone saw naked Truth!

Padmakumar Mehra, of Dehra Dun, asks: What is the past tense of 'broadcast', also its past participle? The word is the same for all three tenses. Another word used for both present and past tenses and as past participle is 'telecast'. This word refers to whatever is shown on the television, and not anything that is put out through radio. However, the word broadcast can also be used for items that appear on the TV. "The news was broadcast on the TV"—will be a correct expression.





(As Paris, the prince of Troy, leads Helen, the beautiful queen of King Menelaus, all the Greek heroes launch an expedition to Troy. A fierce war breaks out between the Trojans and the Greeks. It continues for nine years.)

The Greeks at last understood that it was far from easy to enter the fort of Troy. Many of the Greek nobles and soldiers were yearning to return home. They had left their families far away and they had no chance of getting any news of them.

Ulysses was growing impatient. He came to know that in the temple of Goddess Athene in Troy there was an object known as the Luck of Troy. As long as it was there, Troy could not be

taken by any enemy.

One day the Trojans, standing on the walls of their fort, saw a funny scene in front of the Greek camp. A beggar in rags was being beaten up mercilessly by the Greeks. The fellow bled, but so sharp was his tongue that he went on heaping abuses on all the Greek heroes. He was kicked and was hurled towards the Trojan fort. He lay like a dead man. Some Trojans took pity on him and gave him water

4. FALL OF TROY





and sprinkled some on his face and took him into their city. On regaining his senses, he told them the story of his life. He was once a pirate. Then he was captured and made a slave. One day he escaped from his master and boarded a ship. Unfortunately the ship sank in a storm. He escaped by lying on a floating plank. On reaching the shore, he began living as a beggar.

The nobles of the Greek camp took pity on him and threw leaves and meat at him. But lately they suspected that he was a thief. That is why they tortured him.

The Trojans enjoyed the beggar's sarcastic comments on the Greeks.

They fed him and let him sleep on the verandahs of their houses.

One day the beggar sat before a house, speaking to himself. A door opened and Helen came out to see who the stranger was. She had heard the fellow uttering the names of her parents!

The stranger smiled at her. "I had seen you when you were a little child. I belong to your father's kingdom. I was familiar with all your kinsmen," he said.

Who would not be moved at meeting someone from the land of one's childhood - and after so many years? Helen took the stranger in. Her servants gave him a warm bath. He was given a set of new clothes and then brought before Helen again.

But Helen took a step backward when her eyes fell on the stranger. She now recognised who he was. He was none other than Ulysses!

Should she shriek and let the Trojans capture Ulysses? As she was wondering on this question, Ulysses spoke softly: "My dear Helen, do not forget that I am your husband's friend and your friend, too. I am here to study the situation. Such spying is not unusual during a war. I promise you that one day I will be by your side when you need it most."



Helen kept the secret to herself. She also confided to him how unhappy she was. Alas, it was because Venus threw a spell on her that she agreed to elope with Paris. And, now, what a misfortune she had brought on the kings and nobles of Greece and Troy!

Ulysses donned his beggar's clothes once again and took leave of Helen. As a parting gift, Helen gave him a tiny golden casket filled with some powder. "If you suffer from much pain, eat a pinch of this powder and you'll fall asleep," she informed him.

Ulysses roamed about in the streets and lay down on the courtyard of Athene's temple. Many others, suf-

fering from diseases or to atone for some sin, were also lying there.

The Luck of Troy was a small shield-shaped metal. It was kept at the feet of the deity. The temple was always guarded by women-priests. Throughout the night one after another, by turn, they strolled in the courtyard.

At midnight, when one priestess retired and a new one, holding a candle, came in, Ulysses rolled his golden casket on her passage. She picked it up and opened it and tasted a pinch of the powder. It tasted very sweet. She then left the casket where it lay.

Within a few moments she col-





lapsed into a sleep which, for her, was never to end! Ulysses got up, picked up the Luck of Troy, too, and hid it under his rags and pretended to be asleep again. In the morning, as soon as the doors of the temple compound opened, he went out.

Slowly he crossed the city gates. The guards had no reason to stop the beggar whom they already knew!

There was great joy in the Greek camp when Ulysses was back with the prize. The heroes found a new confidence. Now that Troy was luckless, they could win.

But their enthusiasm was dampened when one of their greatest

heroes, Achilles, was killed by Paris. As we learnt earlier, the body of Achilles was immune to any injury. But his heels were not. When Paris shot an arrow towards him, the god Apollo sat on the arrow and slanted it in such a way that it struck his heel. He died – but with such a thunderous roar that it sent a shock-wave through Troy.

The death of Achilles soon made the Greeks more vengeful. Philoctetes, a great archer, confronted Paris and shot a deadly arrow at him. It wounded Paris only slightly, but the poison that was in it soon brought about his death.

There was some hope among the Greeks that with the death of Paris the conflict should be over. Paris, by bringing away Helen, had caused the war. Why should the Trojans keep Helen any longer?

But now it had become an issue of prestige for Troy. They refused to hand over Helen. The war continued.

The Greeks were feeling desperate. How long could they continue like that? Ulysses hit upon an idea. He revealed it to the other Greek leaders. His plan was approved.

Menelaus, Helen's husband, was so happy that he embraced Ulysses and said, "There's nothing, my friend,

which I cannot give you!"

"Let's achieve our goal, my friend, and I'll ask you for something!" said Ulysses.

"It shall be yours for the asking!" assured Menelaus.

A huge wooden horse was made by their carpenters. One morning the Trojans saw that the Greeks had sailed away, leaving the wooden horse on the shore. They came out of their fort and surrounded it. What is its mystery? Should they set fire to it or should they drag it into their fort?

Suddenly, some local people brought a Greek soldier to them. He was the only one who had been left behind. He said, while weeping, that the Greeks wanted to sacrifice him to a deity but he had escaped and was in hiding when his countrymen sailed away.

"Why did they leave this wooden horse behind?" the Trojan leaders asked.

"This they made as an offering to God Poseidon. As you know, he is the lord of the Sea and also the lord of the Horses. As the Greeks must cross the sea, they desired to satisfy him," said the solitary Greek soldier.

The Trojans believed him. Now, there was no reason why they should not drag the horse into their fort to



keep it as a trophy. They did so with shouts of joy.

That night the Trojans slept well after so many years. Little did they suspect that the Greek ship was returning to their shore in the dark. By midnight the Greek soldiers came closer to the fort. The solitary Greek soldier, who was inside the fort, opened a secret screw under the wooden horse's belly. At once the leading Greek heroes who were hiding inside it sprang out.

They opened the gates of the fort. Thousands of Greeks rushed in. For nine years they had struggled to come into the fort but had failed. Now their

jubilant was great.

Equally great was the shock and surprise of the Trojans who were obliged to wake up from their happy dreams. The Greeks began burning the entire city and practically all the men.

Menelaus, the husband of Helen, rushed into the house where Helen was. He had drawn his sword to behead her. Yes, she deserved to die, for she had brought his nation years of suffering.

But Ulysses stepped in just on time. "Unsheathe your sword," he said. "You had promised to give me whatever I asked. I ask you for Helen's life. I owe it to her. One day she could

have brought about my death had she disclosed my identity. Today I must save her."

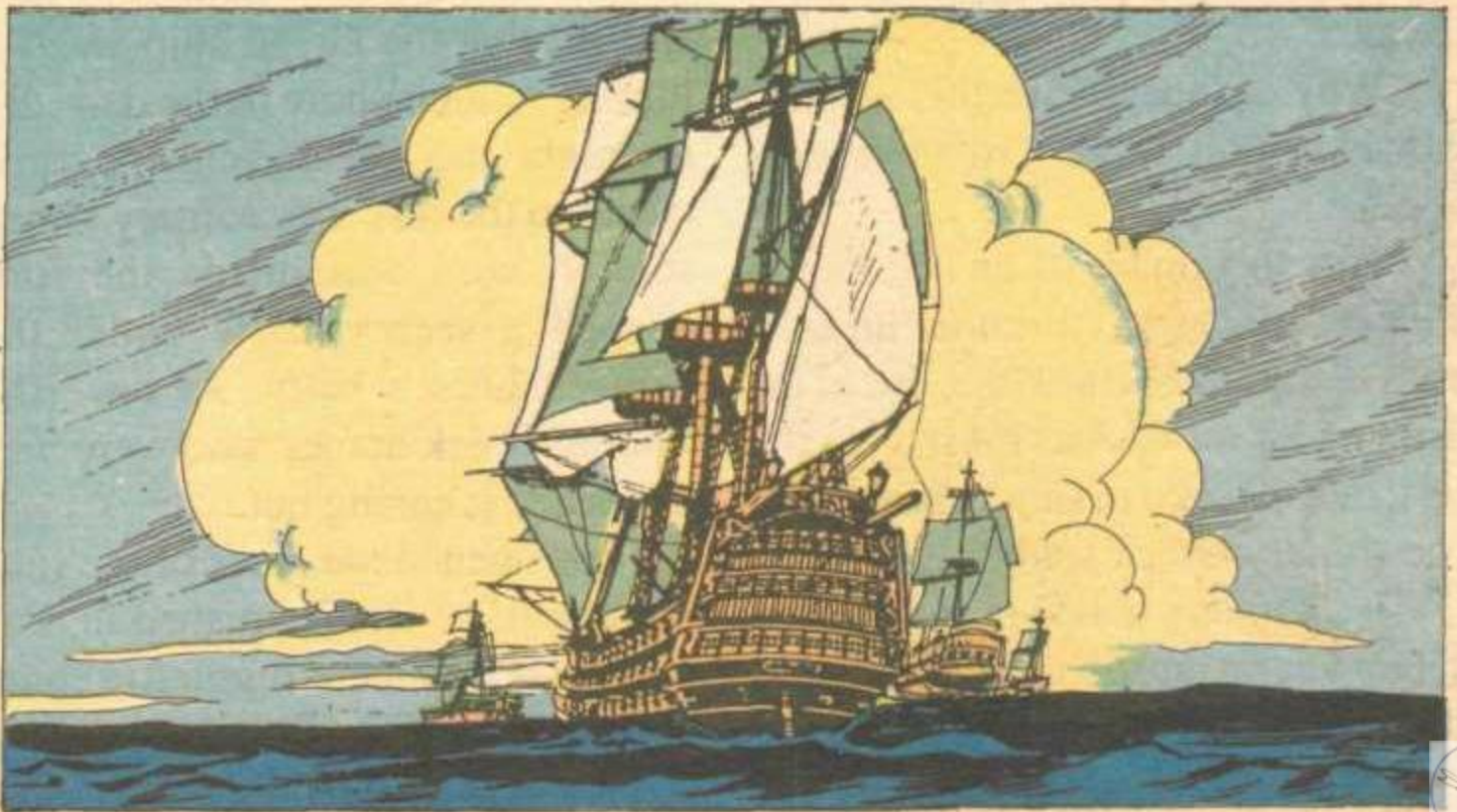
Helen fell at the feet of Menelaus. Indeed, Menelaus knew that Helen could not have done what she did but for her coming under some spell.


He raised her and looked at her face. Both began weeping for joy. Ulysses smiled happily.

Morning was breaking on Troy. But the city was in flames. The Greeks were carrying all the fabulous wealth of the fort to their ships. They were also leading the Trojan women to serve as their slaves.

The war had been over.

—To continue



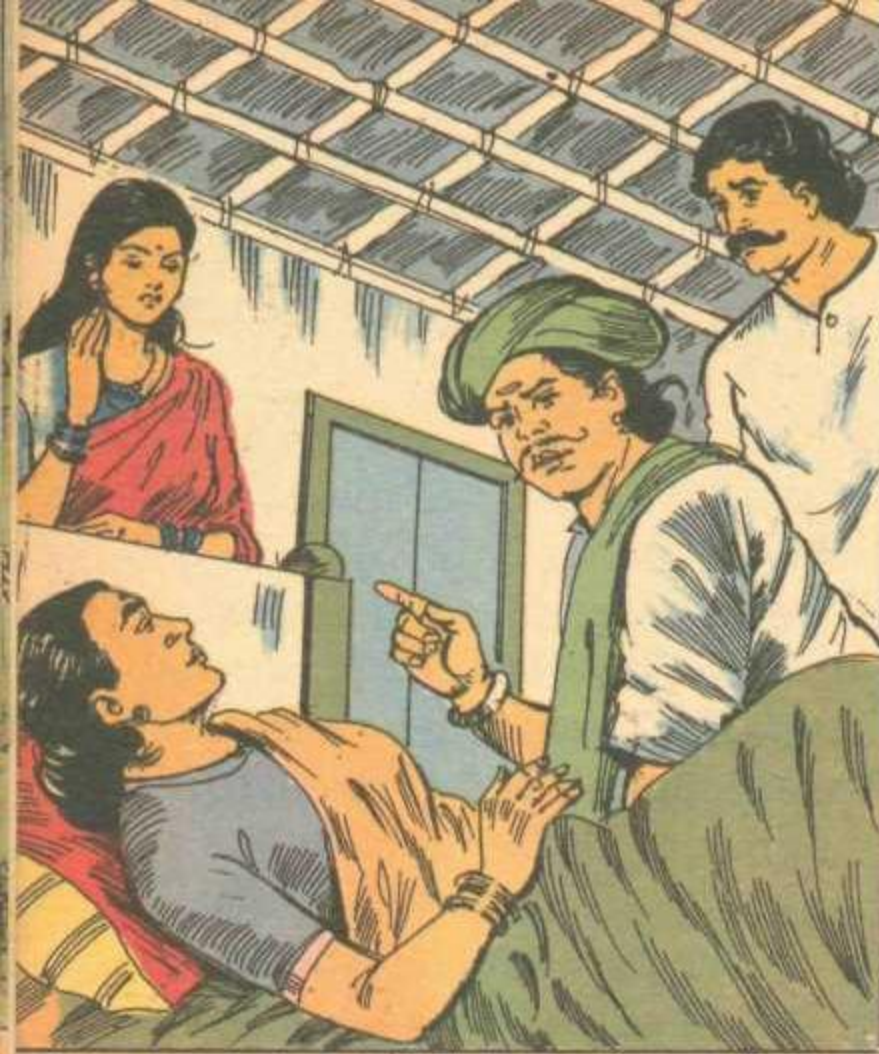
A full-page illustration on the left side of the page depicts King Vikramaditya in a dark, atmospheric setting. He is shown from the waist up, wearing a red tunic with a gold collar and a red skirt. He has a mustache and is looking back over his right shoulder with a determined expression. He is holding a large, curved sword in his right hand. The background is dark and textured, with several skulls floating in the air. The overall mood is mysterious and ominous.

New Tales of King Vikram and the Vampire

A Woman's fidelity

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time; gusts of wind shook the trees. Between thunderclaps and the moaning of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning revealed fearsome faces.

But King Vikramaditya did not swerve a bit. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought down the corpse. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground, with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse spoke: "O King! You seem to be making untiring efforts and without respite as if you wish to achieve something. I pity you. Instead of enjoying comfortable sleep on a cozy bed, you're still coming after me. You appear quite determined; besides you've will power, and above all strength. But sometimes all this can be frustrated by an ordinary man who won't have any of these qualities. I can give you a very good



example. Listen to this story." The vampire then began his narration.

Dharmapuri was like any other village, where lived Dhanapal. He was an only son, and one can imagine what lot of affection his parents had showered on him. They gave him so much freedom that by the time he grew up into a youth, he had become a slave to several bad habits. The parents worried about him, but they did not check him or advise him. They believed that he might change his ways once he got married and had someone to look after him and to be looked after. But who would dare give his daughter to a wayward

youth? the parents wondered. Only someone with a lot of patience would agree to marry him, they concluded. Anyway they began to search for a suitable bride for their son – a girl who was well-behaved and had a lot of patience.

They heard that the neighbouring village had a girl called Anandi who was very clever and well-behaved and would conform to the one they had in their mind. Dhanapal's father set out for the village to find more about the girl and her family.

Anandi's father came of rather poor circumstances. Right then his major problem was to find the wherewithal to give proper treatment to his ailing wife. The doctors in the village were demanding a minimum thousand rupees to restore her health. Poor man! He did not have a hundred rupees to lay his hands on; then why speak about a thousand?

Anandi was aware of her father's predicament. Without telling him, she approached the wife of Panchanath, who was a wealthy landlord of that village. Once the woman was seriously ill, and Anandi had offered her services to attend on her till she recovered. At that time both Panchanath and his wife had



expressed their gratitude to her. Naturally, the girl hoped that they might extend some help to her and her father.

When Anandi reached there, Panchanath was talking to Dhanapal's father. The moment he saw her, he decided that she would make a good wife to his son. When Panchanath was told why she had gone there, he gave her money for her mother's treatment. Anandi had no words to thank him.

Dhanapal's father called on them and told Anandi's father, "I've four acres of land in this village. You may take it and cultivate the land for your use. In return, I ask for your daughter's hand for my son."

Anandi's father knew all about Dhanapal's waywardness. How could he then give his daughter in marriage to such a youth? "Tell me, has anybody said anything good about your son?" he asked Dhanapal's father. "I'm grateful to you for your kind offer. But I don't want to sacrifice my daughter in return."

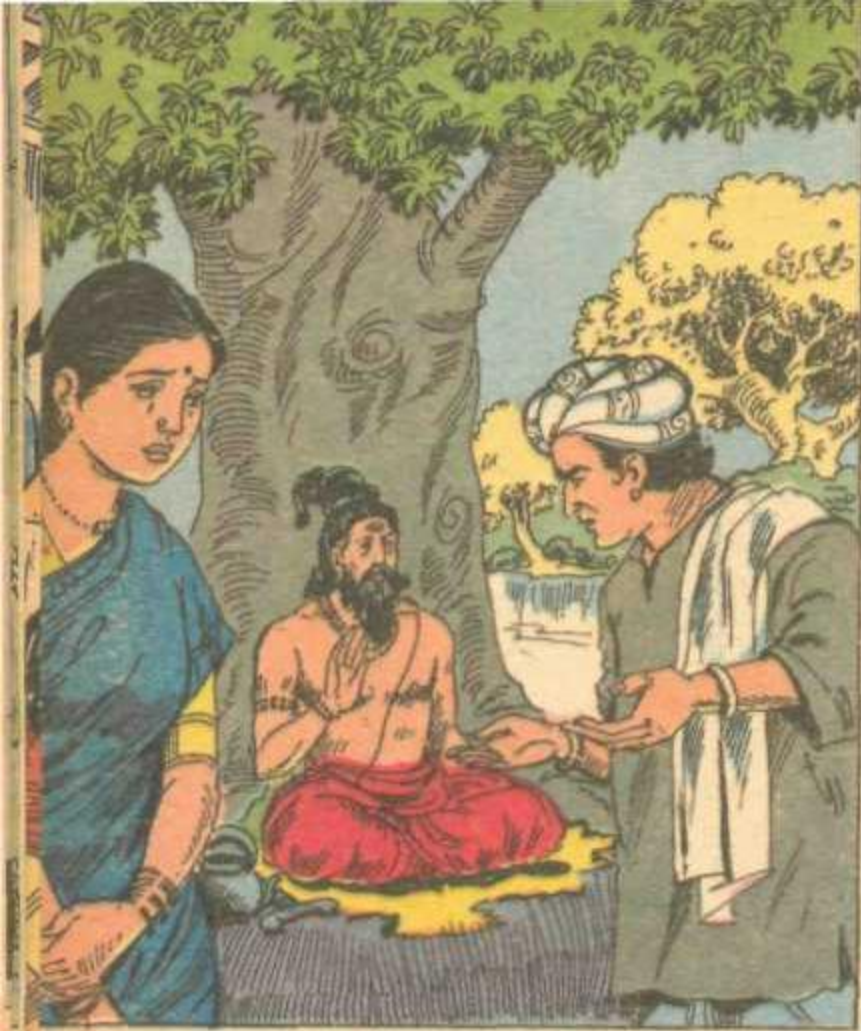
"I do agree, all that you had heard about my son is true," said Dhanapal's father. "These days it's very difficult to get a boy who will be perfect in all respects. Your



daughter has a lot of patience, and I've a feeling that she'll be able to reform my son."

Without their being aware, Anandi was listening to their conversation. She now came forward and said, "Father, please accept his proposal. Our family will only benefit by that. God willing, everything will be all right."

Her father was not surprised when he heard this from Anandi; he knew only too well that his daughter was capable of moulding her life. Before many days passed, he conducted her marriage with Dhanapal. He was apprehensive right from the first day



of their marriage that Anandi would put hindrances to his manner of life. But Anandi did not interfere with his ways and allowed him to do as he pleased. She did not question him or check him.

His father was watching all this and his worry only grew. One day he asked Anandi, "Aren't you doing something about his behaviour? We all thought that your presence here would bring about changes in him. But he seems to have gone from bad to worse. Please advise him and try to reform him."

"You're all older to me and seniors," replied Anandi, "and I should

abide by what you say, but my husband is my lord. His happiness is my happiness as well. If I were to oppose him or put stumbling blocks, he'll be sad, and that'll be far from what a wife is expected to do to her husband. I want to be an ideal wife to him. I won't do anything that'll upset his mind. I hope you won't misunderstand me."

Dhanapal's father was silent after that. Whatever should happen would happen – he reconciled himself to his fate. His prediction did not go wrong. Soon, they found Dhanapal succumbing to an incurable disease. He was examined by doctors who said he would not live long. But Anandi did not despair; she attended on him day and night and took care of him in every way.

His parents, in the meanwhile, started on a pilgrimage visiting several temples and praying for their son's speedy recovery. One day, they happened to meet a *sanyasi* whom they took into confidence. "If your daughter-in-law is an ideal wife, you need not have any anxiety about his life," he assured them. "He'll soon get well. Near this village, there is a pond, and adjacent to it grows a huge tree. A *muni* has been living beneath that tree and meditating,

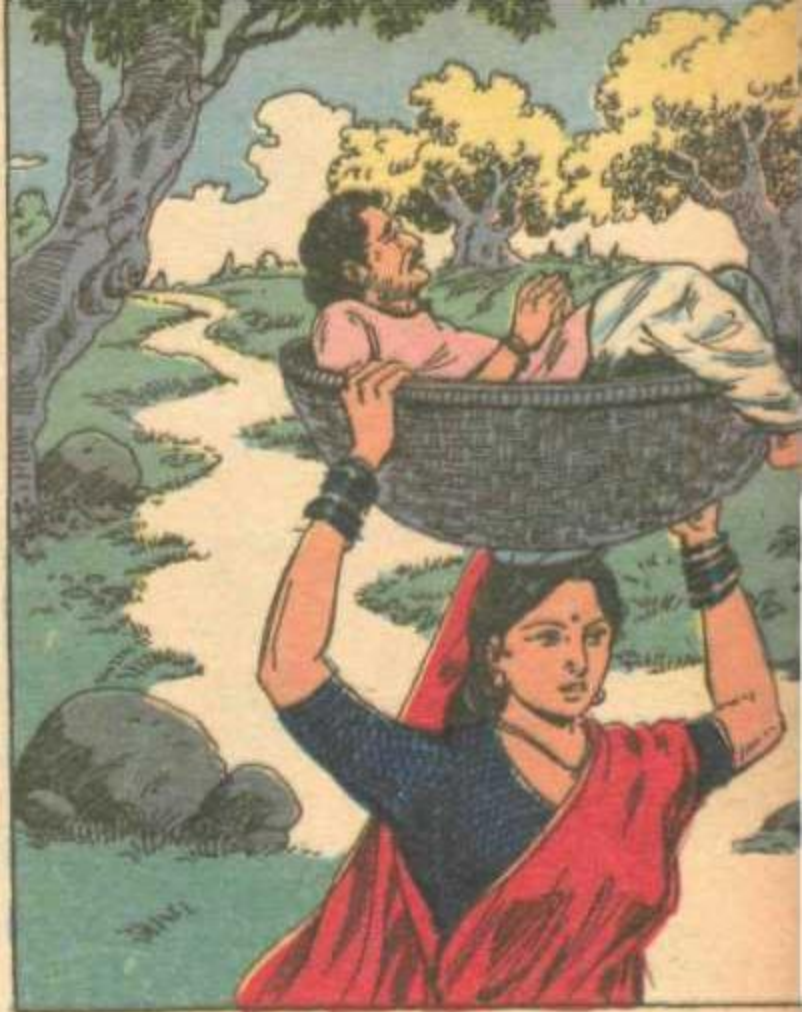


and the tree is believed to have acquired some unique qualities – like curing several diseases. If you give your son its roots, all his illness will vanish in no time."

"I shall even now go there and get hold of the roots," said Dhanapal's father. The *sanyasi*, however, halted him. "That should be done by your daughter-in-law. She must go there carrying her husband in a basket. With an axe she must cut at the roots and put them in his mouth. The next moment he'll rise from the basket," the *sanyasi* reassured him.

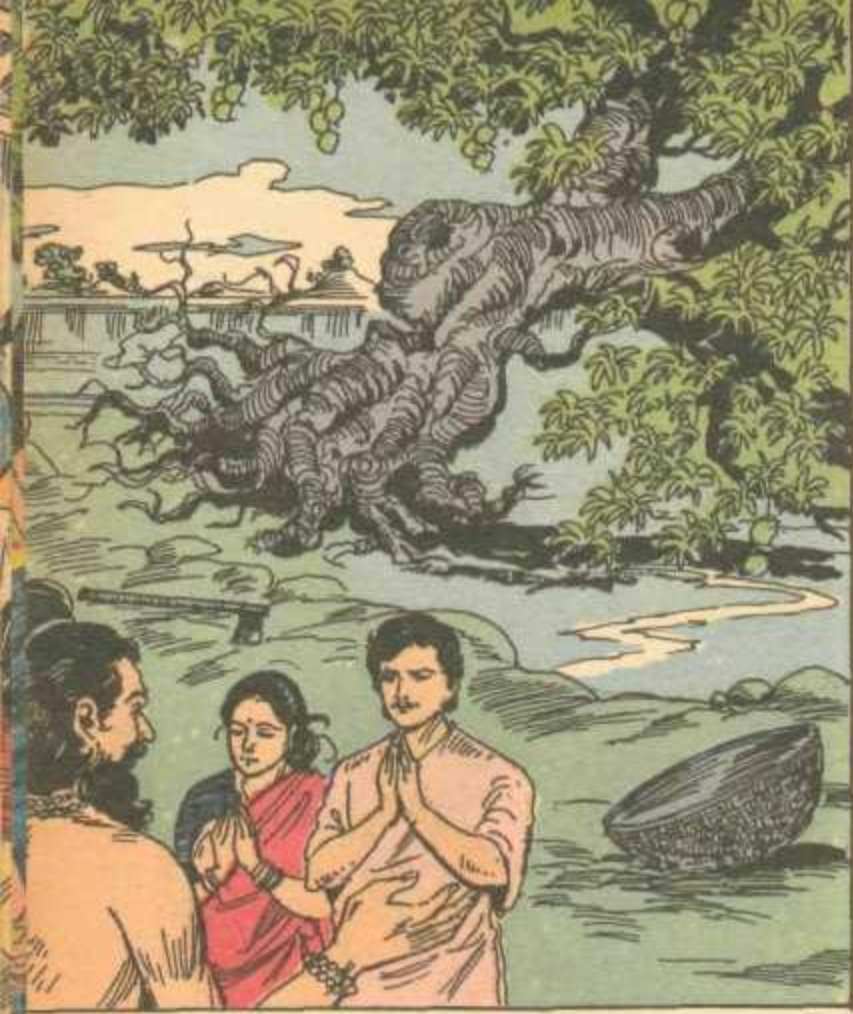
On his return home, Dhanapal's father called Anandi and told her all about the *sanyasi*. She was only too willing to make any sacrifice if that would bring her husband back to health. She carried him in a basket and headed for the sacred pond and the sacred tree. She had a difficult time carrying him along a path full of stones and thorns. She lost her balance and fell down. The basket was thrown off her head, and the man, too, fell down on another side.

Luckily, Anandi did not sustain any injury. Slowly she got up and went up to her husband and placed him once again in the basket. He was restless with pain. "I'm thirsty, Anandi," he said. "Please bring me



some sugarcane juice."

Anandi wondered where she should search for sugarcane in the forest. She strained her eyes and saw a pond and a huge tree by its side at a distance. She guessed that it might be the pond and tree the *sanyasi* had mentioned to her father-in-law. Carrying the axe, she approached the tree. Wonder of wonders! It had golden fruits hanging low. She plucked one fruit, and lo and behold! it turned into a small bowl in her hand. Not only that. It was full of sugarcane juice! She hurried to her husband and gave the juice to him. He felt better.



Anandi then went back to the tree to cut it and get hold of some roots. She had hardly raised the axe when she was stopped by a voice. "No! Don't cut the tree! Who're you? Why do you want to cut the tree?" It was a *muni*.

Anandi told him of her husband's illness and what advice she had got from the *sanyasi*. "What he told you is not true. The root of this tree will not cure him of his illness. You were foolish to have believed him. You may go back home," said the *muni*.

Anandi persisted. "I've full faith in the *sanyasi*'s words. So, I won't go away empty-handed. Please don't

stop me in my efforts." She once again raised the axe, and the *muni* checked her. "This tree has grown out of the power of my meditation. I won't allow you to cut it down!" He then began chanting a *mantra*. The next moment, the axe flew from Anandi's hands and went up and up and disappeared.

Anandi fell at the feet of the *muni*. "Please save my husband! You've the powers to do so. I can't think of any other way to help him."

"Your husband was a wayward man," said the *muni*. "He was cruel to people and he has committed several sins. So, he must suffer the pains of his crimes. Not even god will be able to save him."

"If I'm a chaste woman, god will help me and my husband!" exclaimed Anandi and raised her eyes towards the skies in prayer. Suddenly, the axe re-appeared from nowhere and began cutting the tree by itself. The *muni* tried his best to catch hold of the axe, but it dodged him. The powers he had acquired through meditation were no match to Anandi's devotion to her husband. Soon, the tree fell down on one side.

Anandi pulled out a root and put it into Dhanapal's mouth. A few moments later, he woke up as from





sleep and got out of the basket. He and Anandi paid their obeisance to the *muni* and went back home.

The vampire concluded the story there and turned to Vikramaditya. "O King! Anandi agreed to marry Dhanapal because she was greedy and had an eye on his wealth. At the same time, she was faithful to him, and her fidelity proved to be more powerful than the *muni's* spiritual powers. Why was it so? If you know the answer and yet do not answer me, mind you, your head will be blown to pieces!"

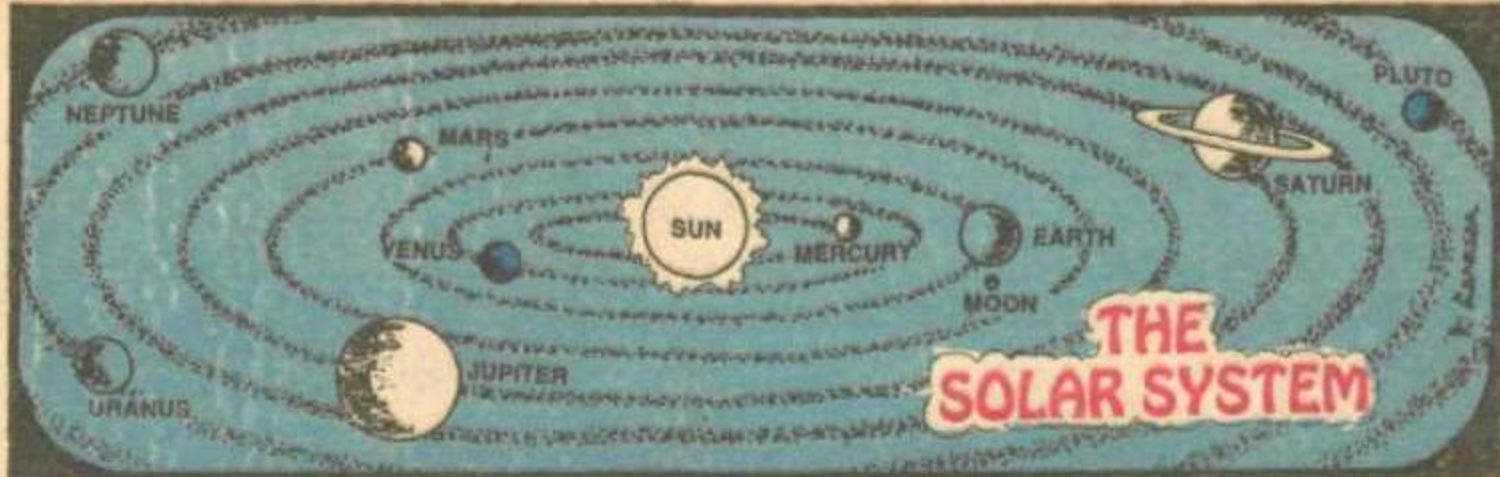
Unmindful of the vampire's threat, Vikramaditya said, "Anandi was not

greedy, as was evidenced by the fact that she carried her husband on her head and set out for the forest with an axe to fell a huge tree. On the other hand, the *muni* only tried to add to his powers without putting them to use to help others. In that sense, he was selfish. In fact, he could not even save the tree that had given him shelter. That's how Anandi had an edge over the *muni*."

The vampire now knew that Vikramaditya had outsmarted him once again. He flew back to the ancient tree carrying the corpse with him. And the king drew his sword and went after the vampire.

Misfortune never comes single
The master's eye makes the horse fat
Oblivion is the best remedy for injuries





THE SOLAR SYSTEM

THE FOUR GIANT NEIGHBOURS

The four giant planets belonging to the Solar System are Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune. Among them, Jupiter is nearest to the sun, situated at a distance of 778.3 million km; Saturn is 1,427 million km away; Uranus 2,869.6 km and Neptune 4,496 away.

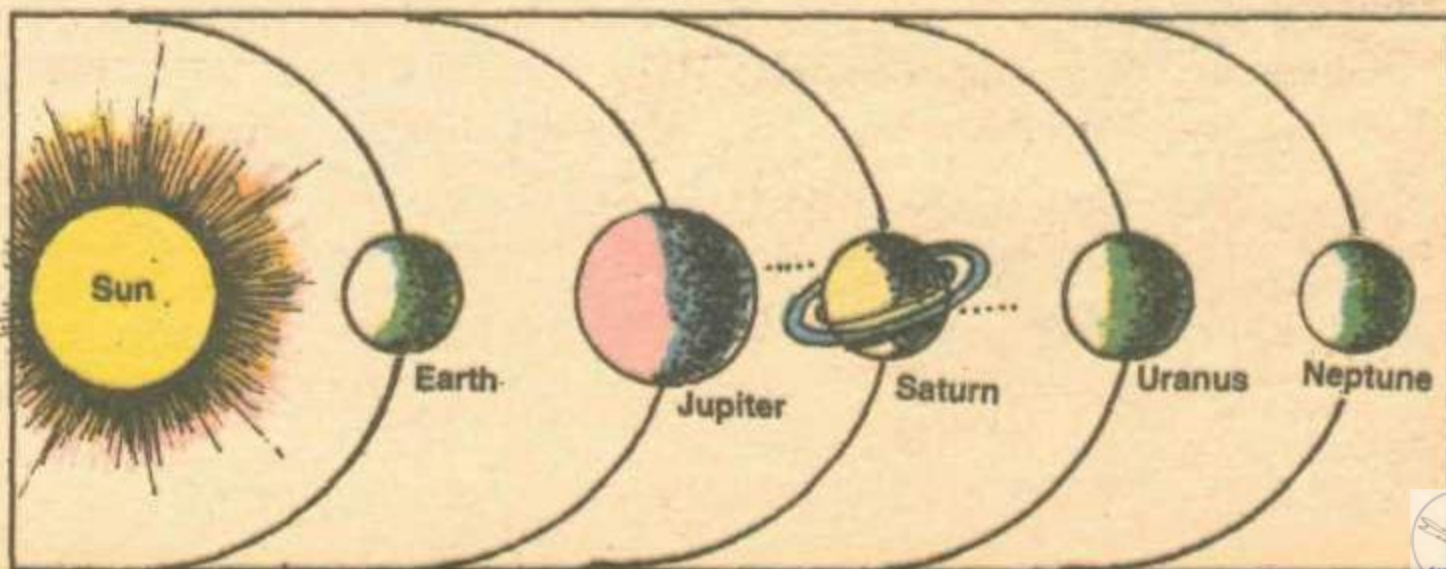
Jupiter is the largest, sporting a diameter of 142,800 km. Next comes Saturn – 120,000 km. Then comes Uranus – 51,800 km, and then Neptune – 49,500 in diameter.

Are you comparing their size to the Earth's humble 12,756 km? But the earth is solid, whereas all these big brothers are gaseous, made mostly of gas or liquid.

Jupiter can hold more than a thousand earths. It has at least a full dozen satellite moons in comparison to Earth's lonely one !

Of all of them, Saturn looks most wonderful when seen through the telescope. Not only has it nine satellites, but a number of rings.

Uranus has five satellites and Neptune only two.



FORTS OF INDIA I

IN the 1960s archaeologists dug up the ruins of a city on the banks of the dry bed of the river Saraswati in Rajasthan. They called the city **Kalibanga** after the black bangles (*kali* – black, *banga* – bangles) found there.

Kalibanga was a fortified city which flourished between 2200 to 1700 BC. Kalibanga belonged to the Indus Valley period.

EARLY FORTS

Text : Meera Ugra
Drawings : Goutam Sen

Forts of the same period have been excavated in Gujarat, Rajasthan and Haryana.

Apart from providing safety from invaders and enemy attacks the forts also provided shelter whenever the rivers which were otherwise the lifelines of these civilizations flooded the banks. For this reason, the main fort was always built on a higher level.

In *Rig-veda*, forts are called *Durga* or *Pura*. Indra has been called *Purandara*, a conqueror of forts.

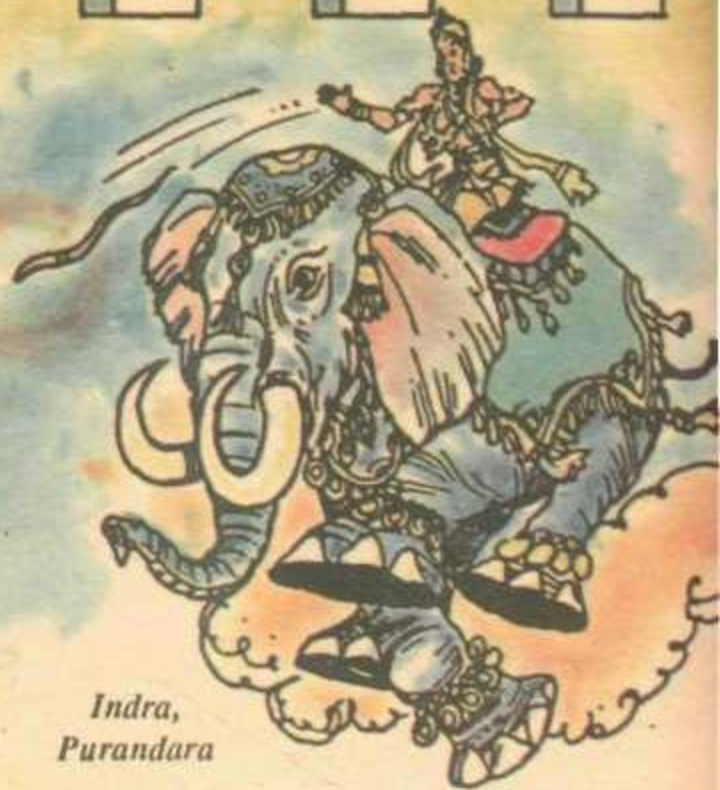
The technical aspects of building a fort has been extensively described in the *Dhanurveda*, associated with the *Yajurveda*. The *Dhanurveda*

Kalibanga belonged to the Indus Valley period

lists six types of forts : a hill fort (*Giridurga*) , a water-fort (*Jala durga*) , a forest fort (*Vana durga*) , a ground fort (*Mahi durga*) , a desert fort (*Dhanva durga*) , and a fort surrounded by trees for four yojana (*Vaksha durga*). The hill fort is considered the best of the six.



Jala durga



*Indra,
Purandara*

A king without a fort has been compared to a serpent without its poison.

The *Ramayana* describes the fort at Ayodhya and Lanka in great detail. "The fort at Ayodhya was surrounded by a deep moat which was very difficult to cross. Its ramparts were high and fearsome". The fort at Lanka was surrounded by gigantic walls, dense forests and hills as well as rivers and a moat. It was considered invincible even by the Gods.

Mahabharata gives a detailed description of forts at Hastinapur, Indraprastha, Mathura, Rajagriha, Ahichchatra and

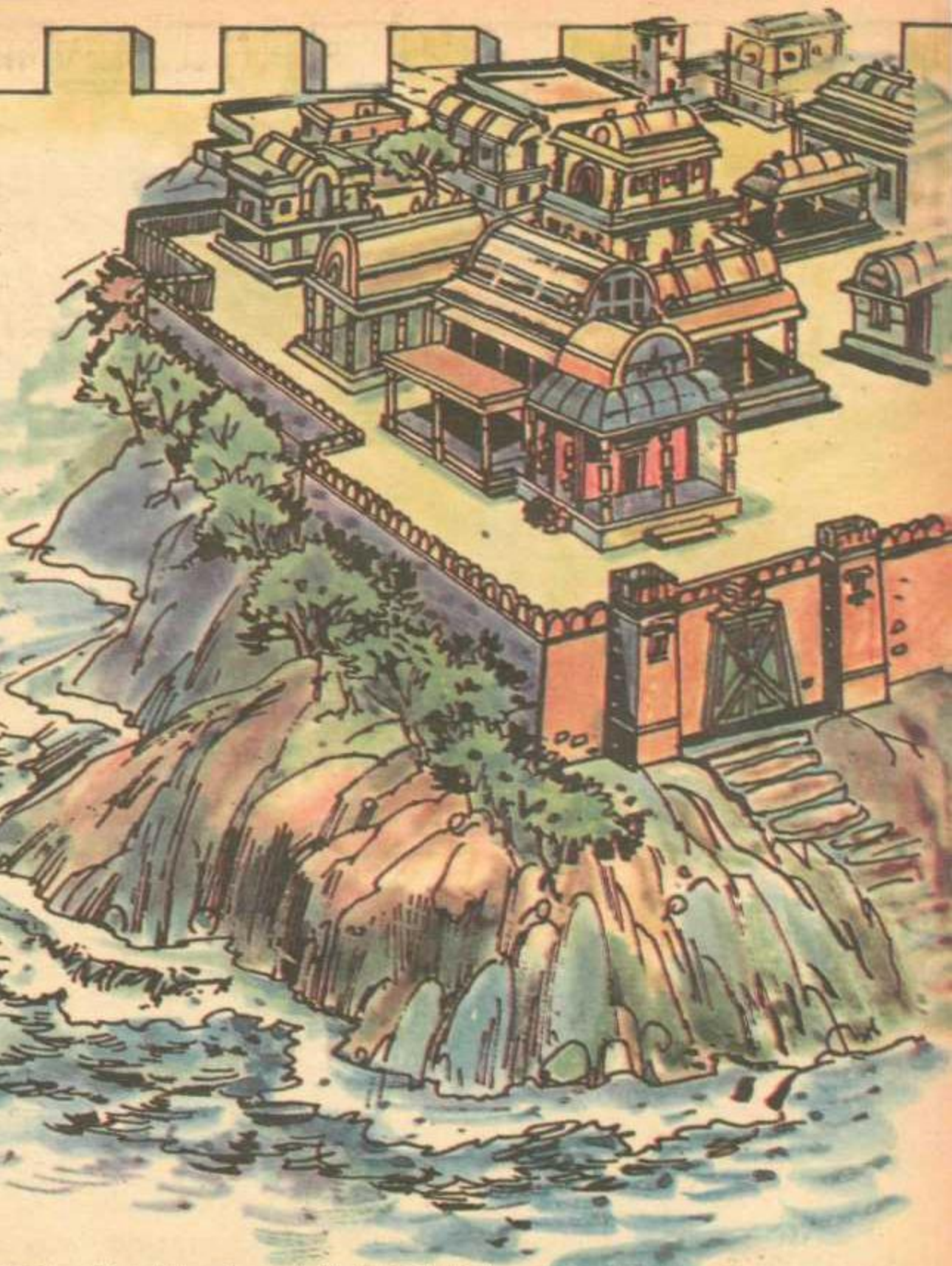


A bridge to Lanka



Dwaraka.
Indraprastha had
huge watch-towers
called *Gopura*.
Throughout the city
a strong network of
various security
devices was spread.
Besides the main
gate, secret gates
called *Garuda dwara*
were also
constructed.

Near Allahabad,
archaeologists have
dug up the remains



of a fort *Kaushambigarh*, said to have been built by Nichakshu, great grandson of the Pandava king, Pareekshit.

Champa, Rajagriha, Saket and Varanasi were important fort-cities during the time of the Buddha. Takshashila, Pushkalavati and Gandhara were powerful kingdoms in the north-west. When Alexander the Great came to India, he found stiff resistance at some of these forts. It took him more than a month to conquer the fort at Pushkalavati. The battle with Paurava, the sight of elephants in the battlefield, and grim encounters with smaller Indian tribes put a fear in Alexander's mighty army.

Another blow to the morale of the Greek army was the description of the military

strength of Magadha which was then ruled by Dhana Nanda. Megasthenes the Greek traveller who later visited Magadha when Chandragupta Maurya ruled, has left a description of the magnificent fort at the capital city of Pataliputra. The wall



The gates of Pataliputra

of the fort was more than 40 km long with a moat 3.5 m deep and 180 m wide running all along the wall of the fort. Crocodiles swam in the moat filled with water. The fort had 64 gates and 570 towers.

In our country the art of fort building had been perfected as early as 300 B.C.

All illustrations shown here are artist's visualisations based on descriptions wherever available. The last illustration is the line drawing of a Sanchi relief.



A fort under siege

THE KING AND TWO MENDICANTS

Long ago, there lived a king who was a generous and charitable ruler. He never failed to help all those who were in need and was quite proud of his virtues. Daily, two wanderers passed by the palace. The king, as usual, gave them charity.

"Your Highness, you've indeed a large and kind heart!" the younger of the two mendicants would always say in a flattering tone.

His companion, an aged man,

would however, raise his hands heavenwards and say : "O Lord, I'm thankful to you for being generous to the king."

This was rather bewildering for the king. One rightly praises him for his goodness, but the other bestows his gratitude on someone else, whereas he deserves it!

The king, however, went on tolerating this for long. One day, when the mendicants called on him, the





king angrily burst out : "I'm kind and generous towards you, but you give credit to the heavens!"

"O King! Don't you realise that if God were not generous towards you, you would not be able to give us anything at all?" explained the old mendicant. "You cannot change anybody's fate. God alone can," he added.

That night, the king pondered deeply over what the man said and did not get a wink of sleep. However, by dawn he had made a plan to test the validity of the mendicant's statement. He summoned his baker and ordered him

to bake two large cakes, both identical in appearance. But he instructed him to put precious stones in one of them as a gift from the king and give it to the mendicant who always praised him. The ordinary cake, naturally, was to be handed over to the other mendicant.

The next day, when the two friends arrived, the baker carried out the royal order. The king intently looked at the goings-on. The two men's joy knew no bounds. They had never tasted such mouth-watering delicacy in their lives. They accepted the cakes delightfully. The young wanderer praised the king very highly, while his companion as usual gave all the credit to God. The anxious ruler heaved a sigh.

As the mendicants left the palace, the man who praised the king found his cake quite hard and very badly baked, indeed. "Would you mind exchanging your cake with mine?" he asked his friend.

"Why not?" answered the other willingly, who always liked to do a good turn, if ever he got a chance.

After exchanging their cakes, the two friends parted and went their way.

Now, the man who praised God felt hungry and could no longer re-



sist the temptation to take a bite of the cake. The moment he did so, there shone before him from its inside a host of precious stones.

"O Almighty, I'm grateful for sending good fortune on my way," he said, looking towards the sky, and was happy that he would not have to go to the palace for alms any longer.

The king was rather surprised that the mendicant who always praised him continued to turn up for alms, all alone. The other man no longer accompanied him. 'Was there a mistake in handing over the cakes?' he wondered and summoned the baker.

"Did you give the cakes to the mendicants exactly according to my instructions?" he asked sternly.

"Yes, Your Majesty, I had strictly carried out your orders," answered the baker.

When the mendicant dropped in the next day, the king questioned him: "What did you do with the cake that was given to you the other day?"

"Well, my Lord, I ate it. I had never eaten anything in my life so sweet," he replied.

"Speak out the truth!" the king burst into a fury.

The man was in tears. "The cake was hard and did not seem to be well baked at all," he said. "So I exchanged it with my friend's," he replied and added, "I haven't met him since that day."

Now it dawned on the king the truth behind the old mendicant's words.

'Indeed, luck comes from the heavens alone!' exclaimed an enlightened king, with tears of joy in his eyes.

— Retold by Anup Kishore Das



SPORTS SNIPPETS

RECENT CRICKET RECORDS

● The first India vs. West Indies Test in the current series played in Bombay in November last was the 1,274th Test to be played since the first ever Test played in 1876. It was the 154th Test in India, and 63rd Test between India and West Indies since 1948-49 – of which 35 Tests were played in India.

● It was the 33rd Test to be played in Bombay, which had the distinction of holding the first Test in India in 1933-34. The visiting team was from England.

● The Bombay Test had Dicky Bird from England as the neutral umpire. For him, it was the 61st Test – the most for any Test umpire.

● Sri Lanka was playing the first Test against Zimbabwe in Harare on October 12. Opener Asanka Gurusinha scored 128 before he was dismissed in the 147th over. In the course of his batting, he created a dubious record – the slowest century in Test history! He reached three figures in 533 minutes. It was Gurusinha's fifth Test century.

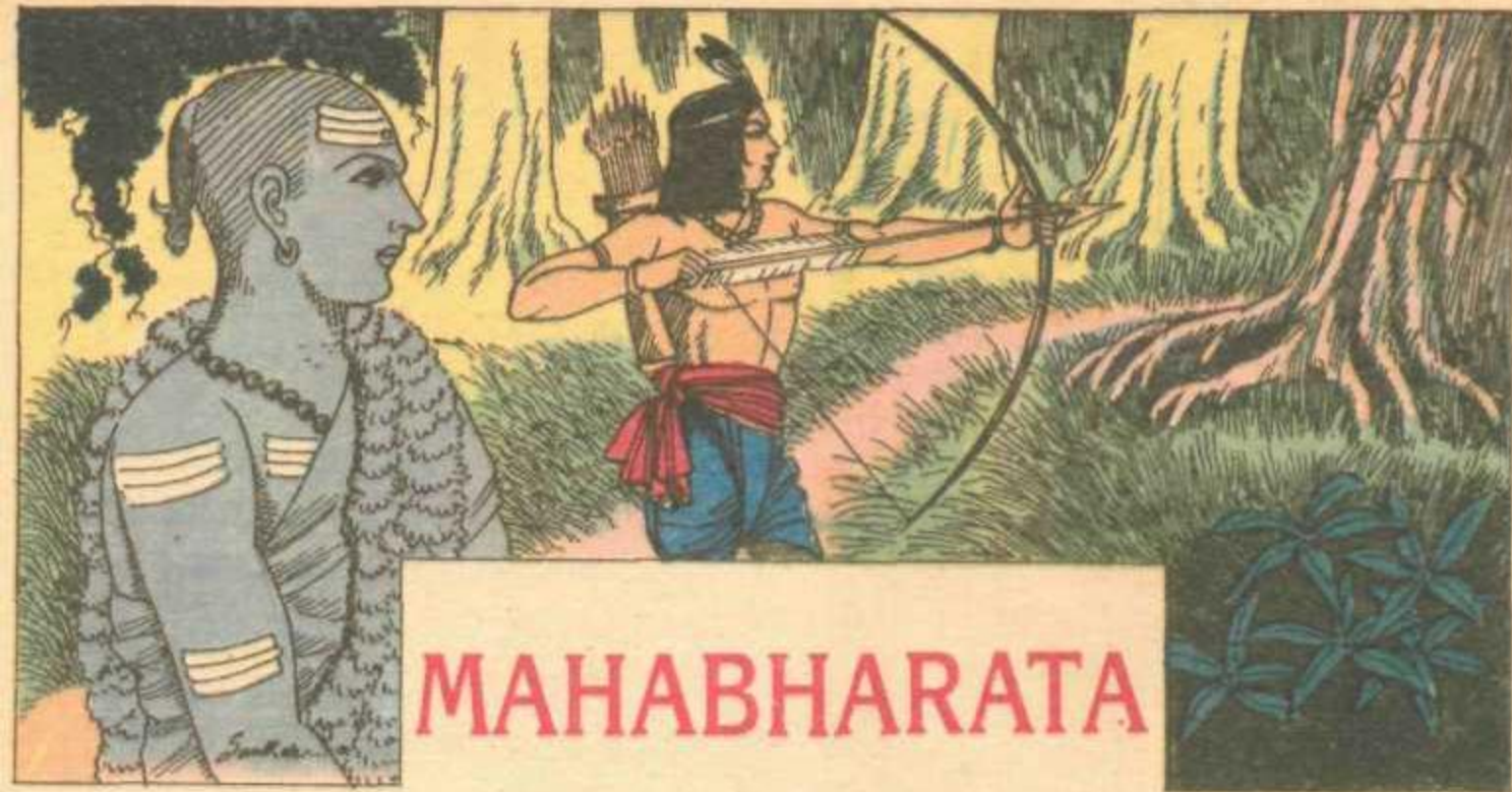
SO NEAR, YET SO FAR

● The 12th Asian Games opened in Hiroshima in Japan on October 2. The next day, the weightlifting competition for women was on. India's N. Kunjarani Devi, from Manipur, who was in the 46kg category, asked for 105kg for her last attempt. She brought the barbel to her chest. For two

minutes all those watching her, including the officials accompanying the Indian team, held their breath, but she failed to jerk it, and thus failed to create a world record. A minute earlier, China's Guan Hong (46kg.) had succeeded with 95kg (a world record) and went on to better it with 102.5 kg, which ultimately remained the world record.



● In Hiroshima, she was called the 'Mighty Mouse'. Mo Huilan, of China, is only 15, weighs 27kg, and is hardly 1.31 metres tall. But she scored 9.95 points on the uneven bars and in floor routines in the gymnastic events for women. Earlier, she had gathered 9.875 points on the beam and 9.650 for the vault. She helped the Chinese team to score a total of 194.375 points to win the gold.



MAHABHARATA

The story so far: King Pandu died early and his elder brother, Dhritarashtra, who was born blind, came to the throne and brought up the five sons of Pandu along with his own hundred sons. Yudhishtira, the eldest son of Pandu, was a man of truth. Bhima, the second son, was a stalwart fighter; and Arjuna, the third son, distinguished himself, above all the other princes, in arms. The two youngest brothers, Nakula and Sahadeva, were twins. Duryodhana, the eldest son of Dhritarashtra, was insanely jealous of his cousins, the Pandavas. He tried to drown Bhima, though in vain. All the princes lived with King Dhritarashtra at Hastinapura. They were trained by Drona, in the use of weapons and the tactics of warfare. A Brahmin warrior, Drona had earned the bitter enmity of Drupada, the King of Panchala. Now read on.....

In the great forests around Hastinapura lived many important tribes. Ekalavya was the son of the chieftain of one of these tribes. Having heard of Drona's fame as a teacher of archery, he went to Hastinapura, hoping that he would be accepted as a pupil.

But Drona refused to take him as his pupil. For, in order to learn ar-

chery, and to use the knowledge properly, a student must learn many other things. Ekalavya did not have the necessary education. Although Ekalavya was bitterly disappointed, he was determined to become a great archer. So, he made a life-size image of Drona in clay in a glade, and stood alongside and practised with his bow. Such was his faith that he soon became



as skilled as any of Drona's pupils.

Then, one day, the Pandava and Kaurava princes were out hunting in the forest close to the place where Ekalavya lived. One of their hounds, running far ahead, suddenly came upon this image of Drona and decided that here was something it could attack. Ekalavya, from a distance, saw what was happening and to save his 'tutor' from being demolished, let fly six arrows which hit the dog symmetrically on each side of its muzzle.

The princes, hearing the dog yelp with pain, and thinking it was being attacked by some ferocious animal, made haste to the spot, but when they

saw the dog, they seemed more concerned at the amazing marksmanship of the archer than the wounds of the poor dog.

Calling to Ekalavya, they asked him who he was and who taught him such mastery of the bow.

"Sirs," replied Ekalavya, bowing to the princes, "I'm Ekalavya, the son of the chieftain, and I'm a disciple of Drona, the great archer."

The princes were surprised that Drona should be teaching a tribal chief's son, unknown to them. Most sad and surprised was Arjuna, who was seething with envy and anger. When they got back to Hastinapura, he immediately confronted Drona and without a word of greeting, shouted, "You said none would ever excel me in archery. Yet, today I met Ekalavya, one of your pupils, whose skill is equal to mine!"

Drona was at a loss for words and in the end demanded that Arjuna take him to meet this so-called pupil of his.

The next day, Arjuna took Drona into the forest, and there in the same glade they saw Ekalavya shooting arrow after arrow with perfect precision. As soon as Ekalavya saw Drona, he threw down his bow and rushed forward.

"O master! I am so glad that you



have come," cried Ekalavya, "for I'm your humble pupil."

"If that is so," said Drona, "what will the pupil give his master as a present?"

"Anything you may command, noble sir," replied Ekalavya.

"Then," demanded Drona, "give me your right thumb."

Without a word, Ekalavya drew out his sword and cut off his right thumb, and presented it to Drona. He was no longer a skilled archer.

The Tournament

Drona strode into the audience hall, where Veda Vyas, Bhishma, Vidura, and Kripa were discussing matters of state with King Dhritarashtra.

Bowing to the king, Drona said: "Your Majesty, the princes are now well-trained in weapons and warfare. Let there be a tournament, so that they can exhibit their skill and valour."

"You've done well," replied the king. "Let there be a tournament; let's fix a date and then proclaim it throughout the kingdom."

So, an arena was got ready. It was surrounded by pavilions for the royal household and gaily bedecked tents for the nobles. When the festive day dawned, every vantage point around the arena was packed with people



who had travelled from the four corners of the kingdom. A happy and jostling crowd looked forward to seeing the noble princes perform feats with their arms and weapons.

Soon after the arrival of King Dhritarashtra, the trumpeters sounded the commencement of the tournament and then, led by the stately Drona, the princes marched into the arena.

Chariot races started the day. Then there were mock battles on elephants and horses which drove the vast crowd into a frenzy of excitement.

A mock fight with maces between Bhima and Duryodhana soon devel-



oped into a deadly combat. Remembering their past rivalry, each tried to maim the other, until Drona stepped between them, and reminded the princes of the laws of chivalry.

The last item on the programme was an individual display of archery by Arjuna. When he entered the arena, he was greeted by a deafening roar that could be heard for distances around.

Arjuna displayed his matchless skill with weapons and the vast crowd was lost in wonder and admiration. His prowess with the bow seemed superhuman. Targets placed at even one end of the vast arena were hit with perfect ease.

Duryodhana could scarcely hide

the envy and hate he nurtured against Arjuna. And then, when everyone thought that the tournament was at an end, from the entrance came a clash of arms in challenge, and into the arena walked a godlike youth dressed in an armour of gold. He looked proudly around him, and strode up to Arjuna. By the bitter irony of fate, and unknown to each other, they were brothers, for this was Karna, the firstborn of Queen Kunti.

Karna barely acknowledged Drona, and addressed Arjuna in a voice of pealing thunder: "Prince Arjuna, all the feats you have performed I can perform much better."

Drona thought that this was an idle



boast, but agreed to let Karna show what he could do. To the astonishment of everyone, Karna repeated all that Arjuna had done, with grace.

Duryodhana was overjoyed, and rushing into the arena, threw his arms around Karna. "Welcome, O great warrior, I and all this kingdom are at your command," he said.

"I'm grateful," replied Karna. "Only one thing I desire, and that is a single combat with Arjuna."

Arjuna, mad with anger, confronted Karna and in a contemptuous voice shouted: "You, shall die the death of a braggart."

The two combatants grasped their weapons, and as they were about to fight, Kripa, well versed in the laws of chivalry, stepped between them.

"Stop!" he shouted. "The rules of single combat do not allow a prince to fight with an unknown adventurer." He then turned to Karna: "Speak up

and name your parentage."

Karna hung his head in shame, but Duryodhana was not to be outdone! "If this combat cannot take place merely because Karna is not a prince, that is easily remedied," he said and raised his arm high. "I hereby crown Karna, King of Anga," he declared.

After obtaining the assent of his father, King Dhritarashtra, Duryodhana had a throne brought into the arena, and invested Karna with the sovereignty of the Kingdom of Anga.

All this time Kunti, sitting in the royal pavilion, had realised that Karna was her firstborn son. She sat stupefied, not knowing how to stop her sons from fighting.

By then the sun had set and the trumpeters sounded the end of the tournament, and so Duryodhana took Karna in his chariot and drove away.

—To continue



No one the loser

A man walked along the road carrying a basket on his head. He was looking at the shops to decide where he would sell his ware. As he was careless, he tripped and fell down. All that was in the basket, too, fell down and lay shattered. They were glass tumblers and bowls. "Poor man!" the bystanders and passers-by pitied him.

One of them came forward. "His master will surely make good the loss by cutting his salary. Let me help him by giving him my mite," he remarked. He then gave the man a rupee.

Many others followed suit and contributed whatever they could spare. Some gave him a rupee, or more than a rupee, or even small change. The man gratefully collected all that. "That's good," a bystander remarked. "You can now go and buy some tumblers and bowls. You wouldn't suffer any loss. By the way, who's your master?" he asked curiously.

"Didn't you see someone giving me a rupee first?" the man replied. "He's my master. He didn't lose anything by giving me a rupee; and I too haven't lost anything."



The Secret of Being Rich

There once lived two little poor boys in the kingdom of Malwa. They were great friends and they spent most of their time together, both at study and play. In due time, the boys grew up and became two handsome young men. But they were of opposite temperaments and dispositions, and developed in different directions. While one of them was interested in study and research, the other took a fancy for business. Both of them, however, prospered in their respective fields. The young man interested in study and research

earned a reputation far and wide as a great scholar and was known as Vidyabaridhi (Ocean of Learning); and the other, who became the richest man in the country, gained the title of Kuberaputra (Son of the Lord of Wealth).

In spite of their differences in profession and interest, they remained friends. Vidyabaridhi spent all his time in his cottage in study and research, almost all his earthly belongings being books and manuscripts. He continued as poor as he was at birth and never accepted any





gift from his rich friend, though the latter was more than willing to offer handfuls of gold and silver to his poor friend.

Vidyabaridhi, though a great scholar, well-versed in the various disciplines of the arts, sciences, and commerce, never understood the secret of the success of his friend Kuberaputra and marvelled at the worldly achievements of his friend. Being curious by nature, as was apt for a scholar, he asked Kuberaputra one day, "Friend, forgive me for asking you this. But, as we are life-long friends, I hope you won't mind my curiosity. Though you were born

as poor as I was, you've become the richest man in the country; you possess mansions, chariots, and chests full of diamonds, gold, and silver. Please tell me the secret of being rich."

Said Kuberaputra to Vidyabaridhi, "There shouldn't be any secret between friends. I shall answer your question in due time."

A few months later, Kuberaputra had to travel to a far-off country on business. As always, he came to pay a visit to Vidyabaridhi.

The two friends exchanged pleasantries. Before taking leave, Kuberaputra said, "This time, please do me a favour. Keep an eye on my tall mansion till I come back. Here are the keys; with these you can open any room you like. Please feel free to open all my rooms and have a glimpse of my wealth. But I request you not to open the room with the red door, even though the key of the red door is also in this bunch."

Vidyabaridhi agreed to keep an eye on the mansion during his friend's absence, and took hold of the keys. Kuberaputra left in his chariot, which was studded with gold, and drawn by several horses.

As soon as Kuberaputra left for the far-off land, Vidyabaridhi's cu-



riosity to have a glimpse of his friend's wealth grew more than ever before, and he soon entered his friend's huge mansion. Without knowing why his heart thumped so, he opened room after room. He could not believe what he saw. One room was filled with diamonds, the other with emeralds, the third with gold. Vidyabaridhi had never imagined that Kuberaputra could possess so much wealth. He was now sure that his friend was the richest man in the world.

Vidyabaridhi opened all the doors of all the rooms – except the room with the red door and returned to his cottage, bewildered by the vastness of his friend's wealth.

But he could not sleep that night. He had a very strong desire to open the room with the red door, and see what his friend had kept there. He had promised his friend not to open that room, and he knew that he would be betraying his friend if he opened that room. For a long time he was in a state of great conflict, but finally he decided to open the room with the red door and see what was there.

So Vidyabaridhi, hesitating and fearful, opened the red door in Kuberaputra's mansion. As soon as he opened the door, he almost fainted at what he saw, and at the awful



stink that filled the room. There were hundreds of human skeletons, arranged in line, looking as if they were alive and mocking. However, Vidyabaridhi still had some courage left and he just managed to lock the red door and run for his life back to his cottage.

This experience made Vidyabaridhi serious, even gloomy. For many days he behaved like a man deaf and dumb. By and by, his normal state of mind returned and he resumed his study and research. But all the time he wondered why his friend had one room full of human skeletons, while all the others were



filled with diamonds, emeralds, and gold.

Several months passed and after a successful business trip abroad, Kuberaputra returned with a vast quantity of treasures in locked iron chests. First, he came to collect his bunch of keys from Vidyabaridhi, thanked him for looking after his mansion so well during his absence, and accepted, as usual, his friend's humble hospitality.

Kuberaputra could easily see that his friend looked worried, at the same time trying his best to look happy and cheerful. Wise as Kuberaputra was in the ways of the world, he said, "Friend, do forgive me for saying this, but I'm sure you now know the secret of my being the wealthiest man of Malwa."

Vidyabaridhi did not understand. So, Kuberaputra explained, "Look, the secret of acquiring wealth is

rather simple. You cannot acquire wealth unless and until you exploit others and deprive them of *their* wealth. The skeletons you saw in the room with the red door are of the people whose wealth I have acquired by whatever means possible, and the poor fellows had turned to skeletons. In fact, the door of that room has been painted red with their blood. To possess rooms of treasure, you have to possess rooms of human skeletons, too."

Kuberaputra paused for a second. Vidyabaridhi was looking at him with the eyes of a stranger. Kuberaputra continued, "I'm happy that you opened the red door; now you know the secret. But, I'm sorry that you're so greatly disturbed at the revelation of this truth. Truth, my dear friend, is always unbearable, is it not?"

—Ganeswar Mishra



KOHL BACK IN SADDLE

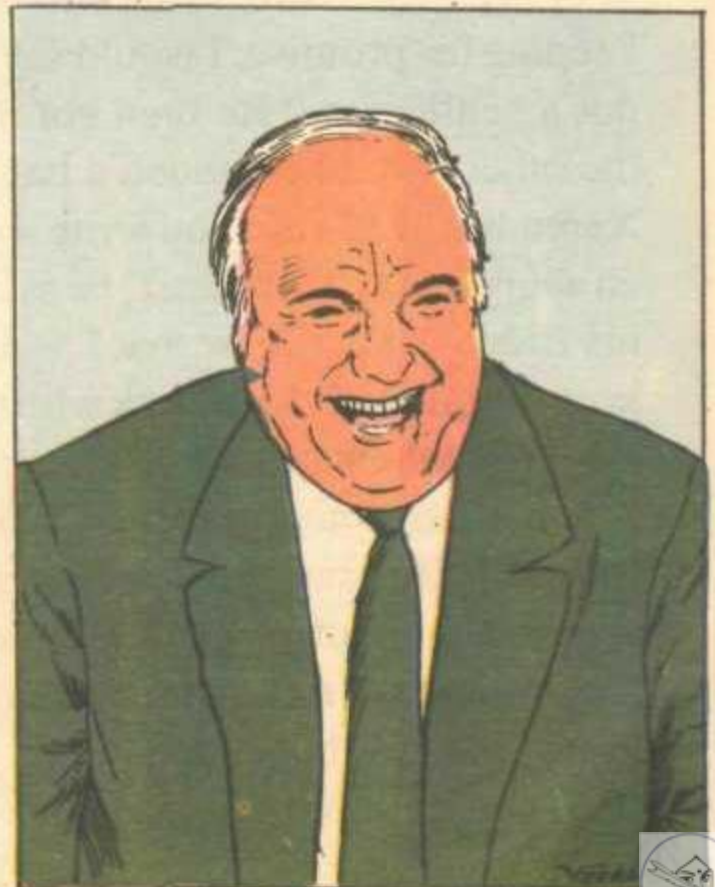
Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany won a fourth term in the General Elections held on November 16. Elected for the first time in the 1982 elections in the former West Germany, he was re-elected for the third time in the 1990 elections – the first after the historic Berlin Wall was broken down to re-unite West and East Germany.

In the 1990 elections, Kohl's coalition had secured nearly 55 per cent of the votes. This year, however, some of the coalition partners individually fared badly, resulting in only a wafer-thin majority of 48.3 per cent, as against 48.1 per cent polled by the opposition. Naturally, the doubt is expressed whether Chancellor Kohl would pull through and complete the full four-year term. If he does, he would surpass the former Chancellor Konrad Adenauer's record of 14 years.

Political commentators are of the opinion that the German people preferred continuity rather than change, and hence their support to Helmut Kohl's Christian Democrats and the coalition partners, the Bavarian Sister Party and the Liberal Free Democrats. Though, according to the analysts, the people have desisted from giving them any overwhelming vote of confidence, they have at least handed them another chance.

The main opposition party, Social Democrats, had in their manifesto stated that they would do away with the Ministry of Economic Cooperation, which has been looking after development assistance to the developing nations. India happens to be the largest recipient of German economic aid. Chancellor Kohl's re-election has, therefore, ensured a continuity in the German commitment to India.

Our readers will remember that Chancellor Helmut Kohl was the recipient of the prestigious Jawaharlal Nehru Award for 1990 (see *Chandamama*, January 1992).





Anger, no remedy

Narendra was, one day, returning home after supervising the work going on in his farm. On the way, he saw his friend, Govind, coming in a horse-cart. Narendra stopped his vehicle. "I was expecting you, Govinda!" he said. "You seem to have kept your promise. I'm so glad."

"You're right, Narendra," said Govind. "I'm very particular about keeping my word. Anyone not keeping his promise, I would say, is not a gentleman." He then got into the other cart, and handed a bag to Narendra. "Why did you write such an angry letter, Narendra?" he asked his friend. "You knew that I would keep my promise. Just check whether I've brought everything."

Narendra almost grabbed the bag from him. He examined the contents and said in a huff, "Yes." Govinda heaved a sigh of relief, for, Narendra was known for his temper.

The cart stopped in front of

Narendra's residence. He and Govind got down. Govind gave the cartman five rupees. "That's what I promised you." The cartman was about to take the note from Govind when Narendra grabbed it from him. "It's unfair!" he flared up with the cartman. "Everybody pays only two rupees to come from the railway station. You thought my friend is from another town, and you could cheat him? No, I won't give you a single paisa more than two rupees." He flung a two-rupee note on his face.

Govind stood shell-shocked. He did not dare say anything that might displease Narendra, lest his friend snubbed him. So, he kept quiet, and could only pity the poor cartman, who was mumbling, "But this gentleman had offered me five rupees...."

"Would you go away of your own, or shall I send my hunting dogs after you?" Narendra shouted at the cartman. "Everybody pays only two



rupees; how then can you ask for five rupees? Go away!"

The cartman drove away. In fact, he did not even pick up the two rupee note that had fallen on the road. "You shouldn't have such short-temper, Narendra!" Govind mustered enough courage to advise his friend. "Poor cartman! He didn't even take that two rupees you gave him."

"If he didn't take it, that's his headache!" said Narendra. "I don't care. That much is a saving for me. Mind you, you saved three rupees just because I got angry with him. Now *you* get another two rupees. This is how I manage my employees and servants. They do their work properly and accept whatever I give them. Sometimes I show my anger to those to whom I would have loaned money. They take care to see that they repay me promptly. None dares question me. We don't lose anything by getting angry with people. On the

contrary, we can often save money. Sometimes I even pose as if I am angry! That's a trick I play on people. There's nothing to lose by adopting such attitude."

"Narendra, your attitude is commendable," remarked Govind. "But be careful. I'm not sure to what it would all lead to. Anyway, it would be advisable if you check your temper. Otherwise, you may land yourself in trouble. By the way, where's the bag that I gave you, Narendra? Did you leave it in that cart while you worked up your anger?"

"Ha! What a shame!" cried out Narendra. "Yes, I did forget to take it from the cart. I've lost all that money! Ten thousand! What a pity! I don't even know the name of the cartman!" He began hitting his head in despair and shame.

Govind was not sure whether he should sympathise with Narendra or sneer at him.



A limit to generosity

Kumar Kripa was of philanthropic disposition. Anybody who went to him for help did not return disappointed. He was so generous that in no time his generosity ate into his wealth. But he did not realise that the poverty he now faced was all due to his nature. He gave away everything that he possessed, and soon there was nothing left to fall back upon.

He never imagined that he would come to such a pass. He could not think of anything other than selling vegetables to eke out a living. People still took advantage of his generous nature and would buy from him on credit and not pay him his dues at all. Even there he found himself easily cheated. He had to think of something else.

He began giving tuitions to children. At first their parents regularly paid him his fees. Later, they de-

faulted in payments and Kumar Kripa was again in dire straits. He came to the conclusion that he would better go to the forests and cut wood and sell it. Those who had enjoyed his generosity seemed to follow him everywhere. One day, an old man sought him out. "You know I'm a poor man. I don't have a paisa with me. My wife has passed away, and I can't buy firewood to cremate her. You must help me with some firewood," he pleaded. Kumar Kripa took pity on the old man and gave him whatever firewood he had cut and stocked, and himself went home with an empty pocket.

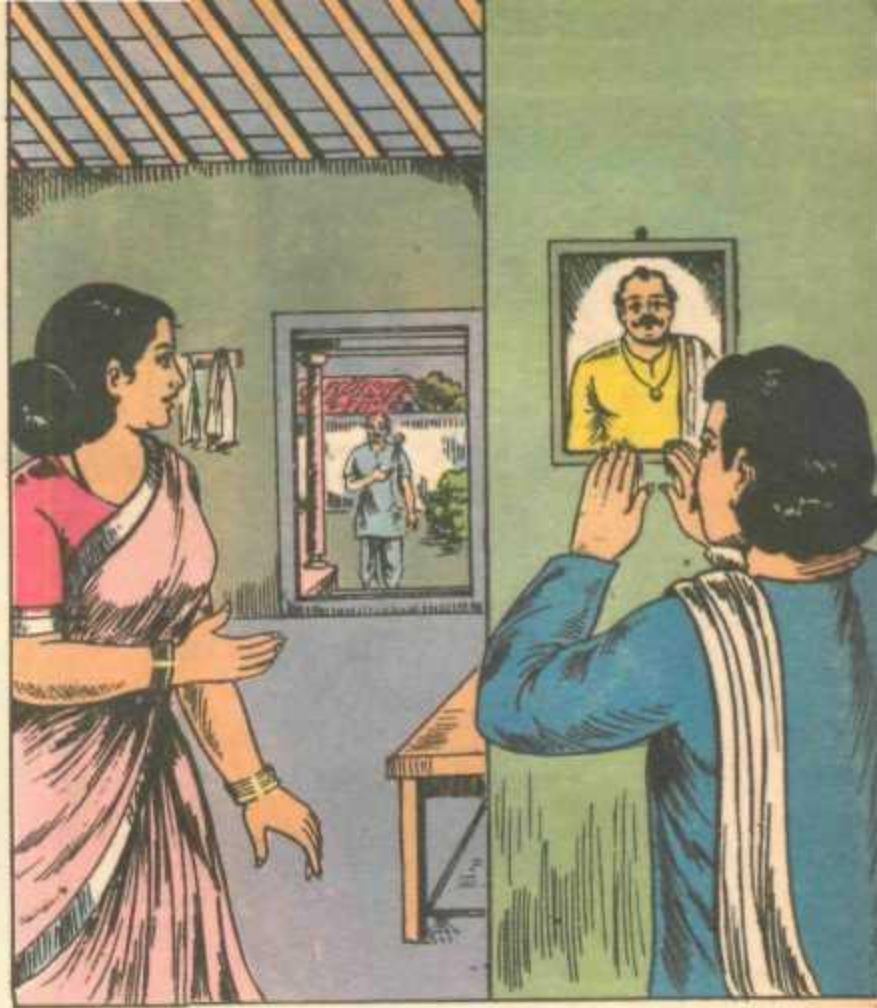
When his wife knew what had happened, she told him, "If we continue to live here, there wouldn't be an end to people coming and asking for help. Ultimately, we will only die even without a drop of water in our mouth."



Kumar Kripa was sorry to see his wife so upset. "Don't worry," he tried to console her. "Anyone who plants a tree will not forget to water it. Do you remember what my father told me before he died? However much we personally suffered, we should not say 'no' to another, but give him whatever is left with us. He had also told me that if I were to pray before his portrait, someone would appear and help us. Let me try that as a last resort."

He went and took a bath, stood before his father's portrait and prayed for a long time. At that very moment, a beggar arrived in front of their house. "O master, please give me some alms!" Kumar Kripa went to the kitchen to ask his wife whether there was anything that could be given to the beggar. She opened a vessel and showed him the few grains of rice she had preserved for their own food. "It doesn't matter even if we go hungry, but we should not send back anyone who comes to us for help. Please go and give all of this to the beggar."

His wife did as she was told to. "You haven't kept anything for yourself!" said the beggar. Apparently, he had listened to their conversation. "Now, what'll you do?



You may keep this single grain. It will bring luck."

After they saw the beggar go away happy, Kumar Kripa's wife went inside and put the grain in the vessel. That night she and her husband went hungry. The next day, when she opened the vessel, her surprise knew no bounds. There was not only rice, but pulses, sugar, salt, and other items - all aplenty. They attributed the miracle to the beggar and his benediction. They very much desired to meet him again so that they could express their gratitude. But the beggar never came that way.

One day, they were attending a





wedding. Their friend had organised poor-feeding. Kumar Kripa and wife saw the beggar they were wanting to meet among the people eating there. They sent word through a server, but the beggar did not wait after he ate. They saw him going away. They decided to follow him. They saw him halt before a house and ask for alms. He was driven out. This happened at two or three more places.

Kumar Kripa now approached the beggar. "Do you remember us?" he asked of the beggar. "You had once helped us, and afterwards we never suffered from any want. You've great powers; why then should you go

begging for alms? Please come with us and be our guest."

"How can I do that?" the beggar showed surprise and reluctance, too. "How can I stay with you and take food all three times a day? I must go to other houses and listen to their 'no' and be sent away empty-handed. Only then would I know who really can afford to give alms and yet says 'no'."

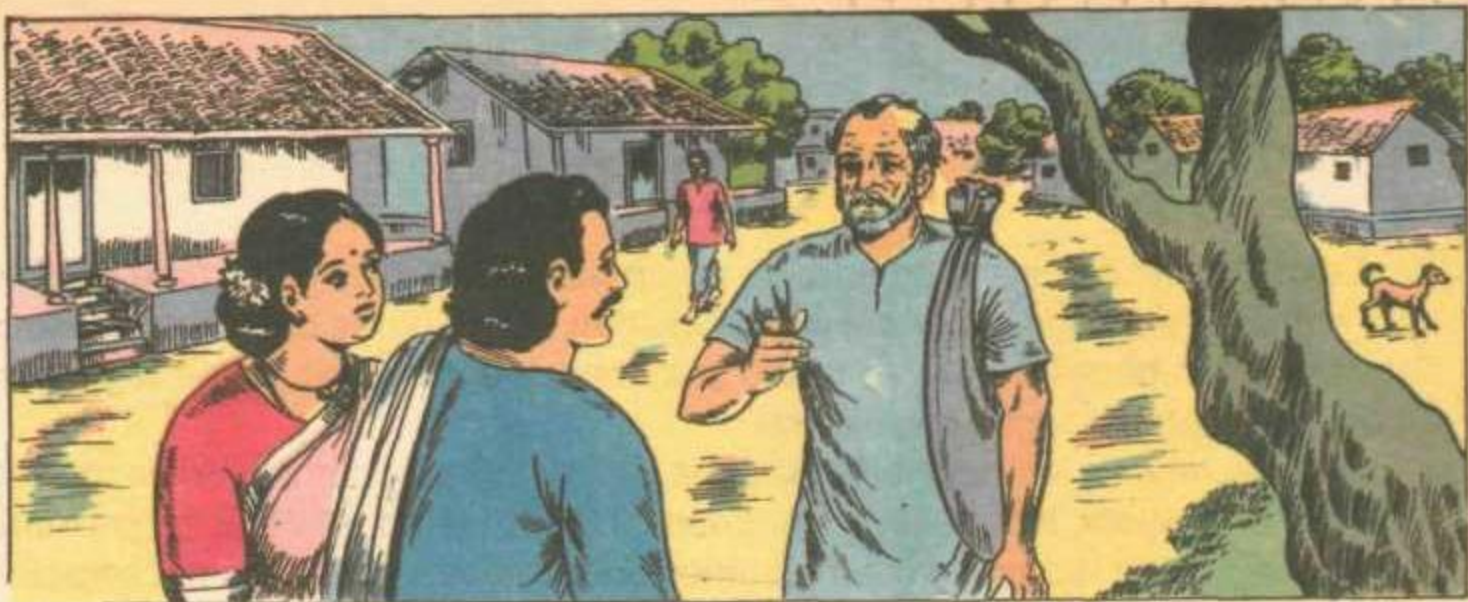
Now, it was the turn of Kumar Kripa to show surprise. "Don't tell us that you're doing all this for our sake," he said. "May we know who our kind-hearted benefactor is?"

"I'm none else than your father, Kumar!" said the beggar.

Immediately, Kumar Kripa and his wife prostrated before him.

When they got up, he told them, "I can't go with you. I'm dead and gone. A soul will go to heaven only if the dead person does not have any desires left in him after death. Till that happens, the soul will be wandering on the earth. My desire is to see that you both lead a life of happiness and contentment. As long as this desire lasts, I shall live in my portrait in your house. I did advise you to be generous. But there's a limit to one's generosity. I didn't want you to be so generous as to give





away all your wealth. You must keep something for yourself before giving away your wealth. Till you acquire something for yourself, I might have to be wandering on the earth."

Kumar Kripa was in tears. "Fa-

ther, I thought I would only get something good, by becoming generous. To see you seeking alms for our sake is too much for me. I shall now take care to retrieve all that I had lost. Only then will I think of more charity."

SPOT THE TEN DIFFERENCES



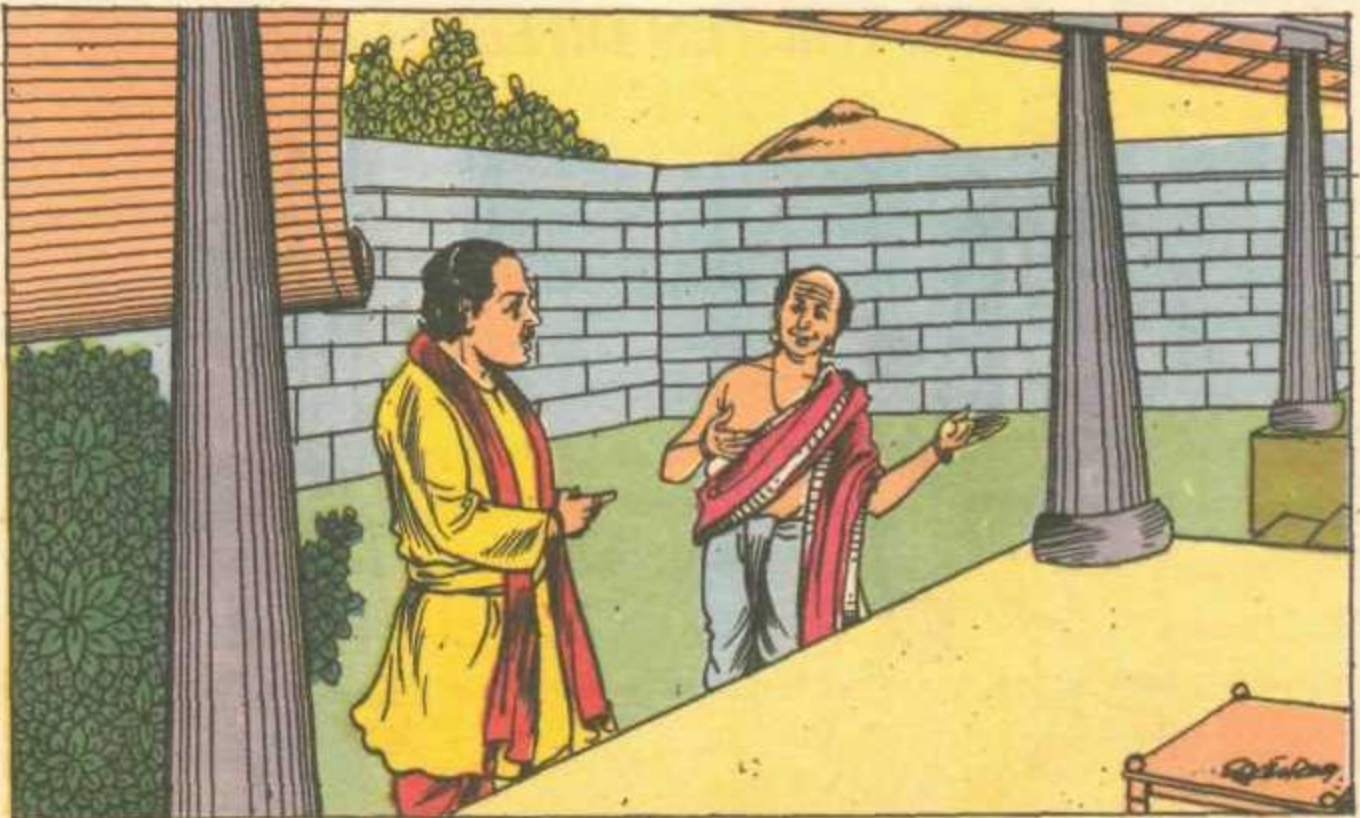
Omen

Ramaiah had blind belief in omens; he would wait for an auspicious time to set out from home, or attend to important work. One day, he left home on business. He had not walked ten paces before he heard someone sneezing. He took it to be a bad omen and started walking back home.

Just then he saw his neighbour Krishna Sastri hurriedly coming down the road. He knew that Sastri, too, believed in omens. He wondered why Sastri had started from home in utter disregard of a bad omen – the sneezing. If it was not something bad for Sastri, why should he be affected by it? thought Ramaiah. So, he decided to continue his journey, instead of returning home.

Ramaiah's mission was a success. So, after all, it had not been a bad omen at all; he heaved a sigh of relief. When he met Krishna Sastri, he asked him: "The other day, you had come out unmindful of the sneezing. So, I too went about my work; and I came back satisfied."

"What should I say, my friend?" Sastri looked crestfallen. "A street dog had entered my house and I was chasing it away," he explained. "Do you think I would have otherwise come out after hearing the sneeze? It was a bad day for me, because



Chandamama Supplement-75

Common Trees of India

With a 'cousin' in Europe

The European Laburnum and its Indian counterpart—*Amaltas*—can be called cousins, though the Indian flowers are prettier and are seen in larger and longer (30 to 45cm) clusters. Between February and March, the tree sheds its leaves and it is then that the bright yellow flowers on the leafless trees make a glorious sight. New leaves appear between April and May.

Commonly seen and growing at heights up to 1,500 metres, the *Amaltas* is one of the most beautiful trees of India. It is a medium-sized tree reaching a height of not more than 12 or 15 metres. The trunk is rather short, but the drooping branches are a spreading type. The leaves are a deep green and are seen on stems in pairs numbering 4 to 8. The leaves are some 10 to 12cm long and 4 to 5cm broad.

The fruit is again a striking sight, because it is 60 to 100cm long and straight, and a near black in colour. A tree can have up to a hundred fruits hanging down from the branches. Inside, the fruit is divided into 40 to 100 cells, each consisting of a parallel partition containing a single flat oval seed. A sweet pulp lines the partition walls and is considered of medicinal value as a mild purgative. The pulp is a favourite with monkeys, who have given the name '*Bandar-lathi*' to the tree. In the botanical name *Cassia fistula*, the first word denotes the classical name, while the other word means a pipe or reed-pipe, because of the shape of the fruit. *Amaltas* is the name in Hindi and Bengali, while in Marathi it is called *Bhava*, in Telugu *Rela*, and in Tamil and Malayalam *Konnei*. The flowers are generally a must item for Hindu religious ceremonies, like the "Vishukkani" in April in Kerala homes.

This decorative tree is widely used as avenue trees in metropolitan cities, like Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras. In fact, Bombay has a Laburnum Road!





THE EARLIEST DRAMATIST

earliest dramatist we know of is Bhasa, and most of his plays are based on episodes chosen from the *Ramayana* or the *Mahabharata*.

Unfortunately, we know practically nothing about this dramatist. For centuries past, historians and students of literature have held him in respect because the great dramatist, Kalidasa, refers to him with respect. Several other old books also speak of him and praise a popular play by him, entitled *Svapnavasavadatta*. Until 1912, nobody had read any of his plays, because they were not to be found.

At last, in 1912, a famous scholar, Pandit Ganapati Shastri, discovered a bunch of manuscripts in Kerala. The bunch contained *Svapnavasavadatta* and twelve other plays. From their style, scholars and critics guessed that they were all written by the same dramatist. Since *Svapnavasavadatta* is wellknown to be by Bhasa, the others also must be by him.

When did Bhasa live? Probably in the 4th or 5th century B.C. Sanskrit then prevailed all over India, if not as the first language, surely as the se

You have read about the two great poets of India, Valmiki and Vyasa. They lived hundreds of years ago. Even so, their books are avidly read even today. What is more, hundreds of poets, in so many languages other than Sanskrit, have been inspired to write poetry based on the stories and situations narrated in the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*.

But why only poetry? Hundreds of plays have been written on one topic or another borrowed from these two epics.

It is quite possible that the very first play was written on one of the stories found in one of these two epics. What is that play? We do not know. The

ond language – as the language of scholars and courts. It is difficult, that is why, to say in which part of the country he lived. His plays must have been popular everywhere. If none of his plays could be found in North India, it is because the manuscripts were kept in temples and temples in the north were destroyed repeatedly by invaders and vandals.

The story of *Svapnavasavadatta*, based on a legend, is like this: Udayana, the young King of Vatsa, has married Vasavadatta, the princess of Ujjain. Udayana spends his time in the company of Vasavadatta, making merry all the time. As a result, the kingdom is not ruled in a proper way. The officers are negligent of their duty.

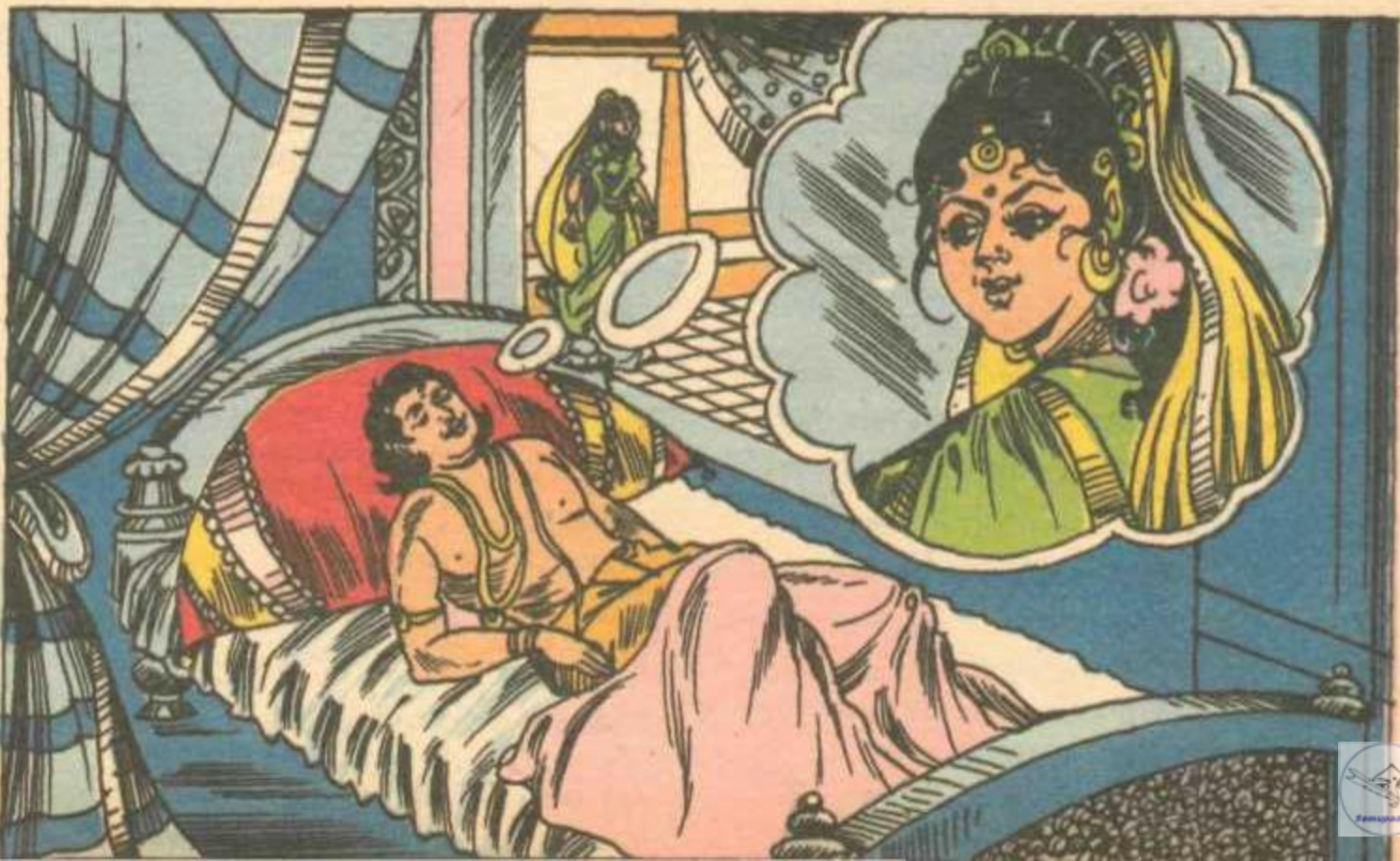
An enemy king takes advantage of this situation and conquers half of the

kingdom.

King Udayana's minister realises that unless the king is separated from Queen Vasavadatta, he will never care for restoring the areas lost to the kingdom. While Vasavadatta is away, the minister spreads a rumour that she has perished in a fire.

Udayana is disheartened, but he tries to forget his sorrow by concentrating on recovering the lost territories. He succeeds. One day, he dreams of Vasavadatta. When his sleep ends, he sees the real Vasavadatta passing by. At first he thinks that it was only a part of his dream. But by then, the wise minister has decided to restore Vasavadatta to him, for the crisis is over.

Thus the king and the queen are re-united.



DO YOU KNOW?

1. When was Mount Everest 'conquered'? By whom?
2. He came to India, converted many Indians, and died a martyr here – in the 1st century A.D. Who was he?
3. Who is the first woman judge to be elevated to India's Supreme Court?
4. When was the tiger chosen as the National Animal of India?
5. Who invented the mechanical typewriter?
6. Which are the Seven Seas?
7. Who created the famous Rock Garden in Chandigarh?
8. In 1804, Napoleon became the Emperor of France. The same year, a great event took place in the world of transport. What was it?
9. Aurangzeb imprisoned one of his daughters for 20 years for her unorthodox views. Name her.
10. Which script is used for the Russian language?

The first Secretary-General of the United Nations (see *Chandamama*, December 1994) was Trygve Lie of Norway (from 1946); he was followed by Dag Hammarskjöld, Sweden (1953), U Thant, Burma (1961), Kurt Waldheim, Austria (1972), Javier Perez de Cuellar, Peru (1982), and Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Egypt (since 1992).

ANSWERS

1. India's Tenzing Norgay and New Zealand's Sir Edmund Hillary, in 1953. They were members of a British expedition.
2. One of the 12 apostles of Jesus Christ – Saint Thomas – reached the present Kerala in the year 52, and was assassinated 16 years later in the church he built on a mount near Madras, named after him. His remains were later interred in a church in the city.
3. Justice Fatima Bevi of Kerala.
4. In November 1972. Till then, the lion was the national animal. The change was made because the tiger population was fast dwindling.
5. The first practicable typewriter was built by Sholes, Gidden, and Soule of Milwaukee, U.S.A., in 1867. Seven years later, Remington & Sons produced the first machines for sale.
6. The Pacific, Atlantic, Arctic, Southern, and Indian Oceans, and the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal.
7. Nek Chand
8. The first steam locomotive was successfully run by R. Trevithick.
9. Zebunissa.
10. Cyrillic.





Why is the sky blue?

– Dhananjay Patro, Bhubaneswar

The violet and blue light of the sun's ray have short waves and are scattered in the atmosphere ten times more than the waves of the red light, which goes straight through the atmosphere. Blue and violet are scattered by particles in the atmosphere. That is how the sky appears blue to our eyes.

Which is the National Song of India?

–Jyotiranjan Biswal, Durgapur

'Vande Mataram' by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee is regarded as our National Song, while 'Jana Gana Mana' by Rabindranath Tagore is our National Anthem.

Kamakshi Rajagopal writes from Belgium :-

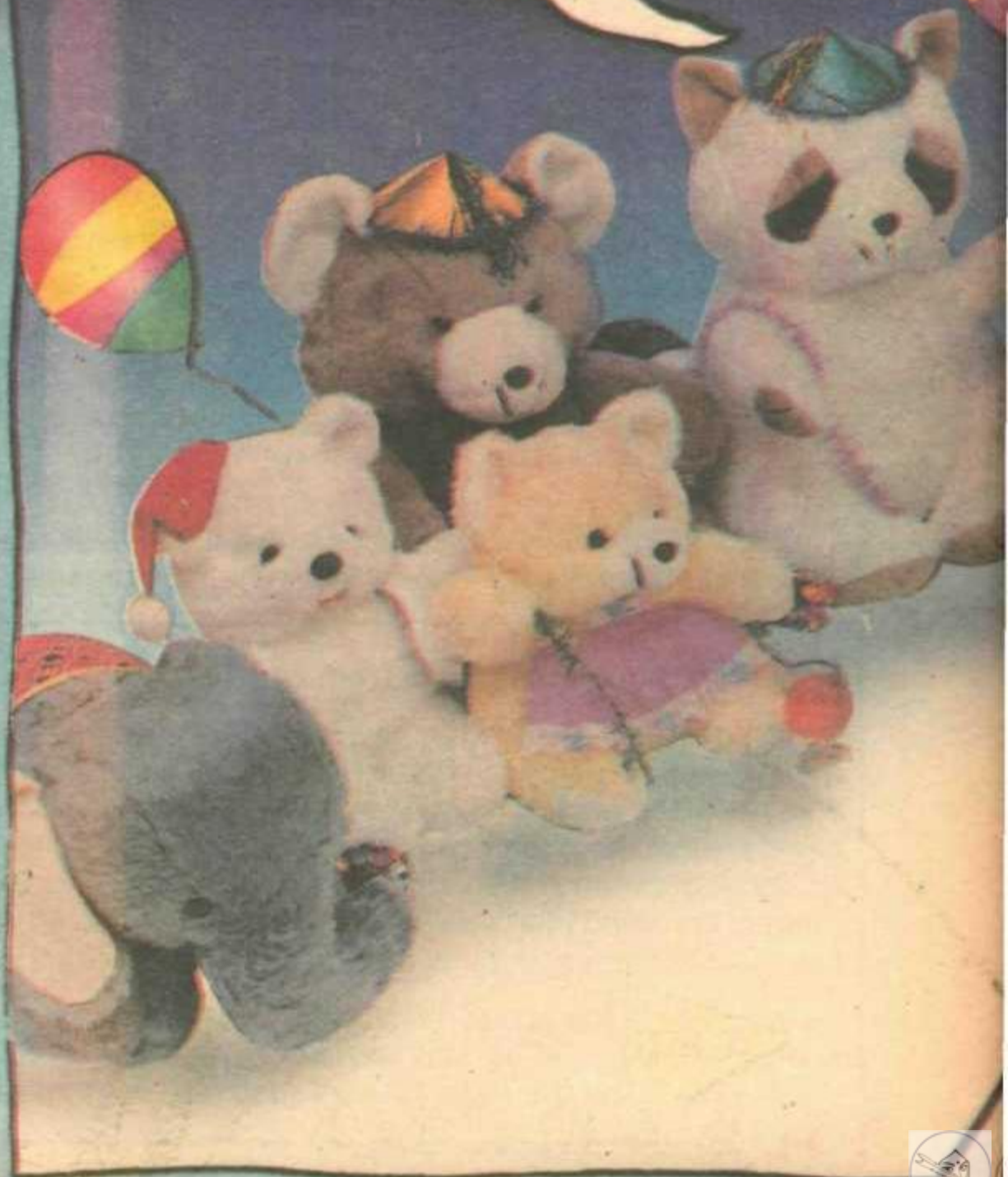
I am very pleased with the columns of '*Chandamama*'. The stories and articles are nice and very worldly. I think it is good for children to get exposed to all the cultures of the world. I have been living nearly all my life in Europe. For me, it is very interesting, for I can learn a lot about India, too. To strengthen the contacts between the readers, would you please start a column to which readers can send their names, addresses and hobbies, so that other children can write to them and make new friends and penpals?

Your name will appear at Number 1 when we start the Penpals column, soon, Kamakshi! Tell us how you like our new feature 'Forts of India'? You will know more about our India through such features and stories.

– Editor



Say "Hello" to text books and friends
'Cause School days are here again
Have a great year and all the best
From Wobbit, Coon and the rest!





It's time to go back to school again. Time for text
books. Time for games. Time to meet old friends.
And make new ones. Time to start studying
again. Because there's so much to learn about
the world around you.

From all of us here at Chandamama, have a
great year in school. And remember to tell us
what you've learnt everyday, when you
come home from school !



CHANDAMAMA
COLLECTION

RTIG1246



PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



S.G. Seshagiri



S.G. Seshagiri

Can you formulate a caption in a few words, to suit these pictures related to each other? If yes, you may write it on a post card and mail it to Photo Caption Contest, Chandamama, to reach us by the 20th of the current month. A reward of Rs. 100/- will go to the best entry which will be published in the issue after the next.

The Prize for November '94 goes to :-

G. Lakshmi Sumalata

Roll No. 7, Class VIII

Learners' Land High School

Narsampet Road, Warangal - 506 002 (A.P.)

The winning entry : "Hobby" "Habit"

PICKS FROM THE WISE

Power corrupts, but lack of power corrupts absolutely.

– Adlai Stevenson

Man is a complex being : he makes deserts bloom, and lakes die.

– Gil Stern

How vain is learning unless intelligence goes with it !

– Stobaeus



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